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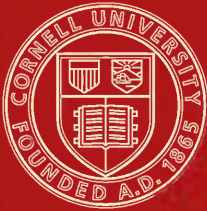
To

William Wordsworth Esq
From the Author

Mary Anne Gale

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DRAMATIC SKETCHES.



TWELVE
DRAMATIC SKETCHES,

FOUNDED ON THE

PASTORAL POETRY OF SCOTLAND.

BY W. M. HETHERINGTON, A.M.

“METHINKS IT WERE A HAPPY LIFE,
TO BE NO BETTER THAN A HOMELY SWAIN.”

SHAKSPEARE.

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TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
MARGARET, BARONESS TORPHICHEN,
WITH EVERY SENTIMENT DUE
TO THOSE VIRTUES
WHICH ADORN
HER ELEVATED RANK,
THIS VOLUME
IS
MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,
BY
HER OBLIGED AND GRATEFUL SERVANT,
THE AUTHOR.

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PREFACE.

THE character of the Scottish Peasantry, which the following Sketches are intended to illustrate, has long been held in the highest estimation, in spite of its somewhat rough and unpromising exterior. Men of educated and philosophical minds, whose habits or inclinations induced them to come into close contact with the inhabitants of our glens and moorlands, have uniformly acknowledged, that in the straw-roofed cottage, and in the homely farmstead, they have often found a generous warmth of heart, a depth and originality of feeling, and a sound, vigorous, and manly intelligence, altogether unapproached by the same class of men in any other country.

It may perhaps be asked, what particular claims the Author has to be credited on this point, and what induced him to give these Sketches to the world? To the country he owes his birth; there he spent all the bright years of infancy, boyhood, and early youth; among rural scenes and rural manners, the capacities of his heart were first called into action; and in the country it was, that while listening to the words of experience, virtue, and religion, from the lips of many a sage and manly peasant, his mind acquired what must continue to be its own peculiar modification of character. Circumstances, which it is unnecessary to relate, having obliged him to mingle in other scenes, the recollection of earlier and sweeter days, frequently incited him to the perusal of pastoral poetry; from which, however, he failed to derive all the pleasure which he had anticipated. Far as it is from his thought or intention to dissent from the long-established fame of Theocritus and Virgil, he must be allowed to say, that not even their beautiful descriptions of Sicilian and Arcadian scenery, presented to his

mind a picture equal to his native mountains, bright and balmy with the blooming heather ; nor could his heart respond to the song of emulous shepherds, praising their rural loves for the prize of a lamb or a beechen bowl, as it had often done to the less polished, but not less natural and animated strains of Scotland's high-souled and pure-hearted peasantry. Nor could the Author bring himself to admit the assertion of certain critics, that country life is, of necessity, excluded from all the deeper workings of passionate joy, sorrow, fear, hope, and love. His own experience taught him that the reverse was the truth ; and in the intervals of severer studies, he attempted, in a Dramatic form, and upon a principle of greater compass than is usually adopted in Pastoral poetry, to produce some sketches of Scottish rural life. It then became an object of consideration whether these might not be laid before the public, with some reasonable prospect of answering a twofold purpose :—giving to the other classes of society representations of rural life and manners ; and contributing to the perpetuation among the

Scottish peasantry of that innate love of the homes, the habits, occupations, and virtues of their fathers, which makes them at once proud of their Country, and their Country's pride.

With a view to ascertain this point, they were shown to one of that class of men, whose manners and characters they were intended to illustrate;—a man, who, for warmth of heart, rectitude of principle, soundness of judgment, and true Christian piety, has rarely been excelled, and to the sympathetic influence of whose fervent and generous character, the Author owns himself indebted for much of whatsoever may be regarded as ardent and imaginative in the following Sketches; and he cannot omit this opportunity of giving to the memory of William Wightman,* all the fame and perpetuity which his feeble efforts may bestow. To this man, so worthy and noble a representative of his class, several of these Sketches were shown; and by him was the Author strongly advised to complete his plan, and lay before the

* Late farmer in the parish of Kirkgunzeon, Galloway.

public, what he averred, from his own knowledge and experience, to be no overstrained or fanciful representation of the Scottish peasantry. Alas ! that instead of listening to his glowing words, rich in Nature's own wisdom, it should be now the Author's sad duty to pay this affectionate, but unavailing tribute, to the memory of departed worth !

The Author was the more induced to adopt the same opinion from the too apparent marks of a growing change in the character of rural life, which forced themselves upon his notice. The rise in the value of all agricultural produce during the late war has, by the sudden influx of wealth which it occasioned, given birth to many encroachments upon the manners and customs of our fathers. Artificial luxuries, and an affected refinement, have, in too many instances, exerted a very baneful influence in banishing virtuous simplicity without conferring an equivalent advantage.

Many and powerful, also, are the methods at present employed to promote the cultivation of the mind, to the neglect, perhaps, of the heart,

and all its feelings ; and yet these are the sources of virtue or vice, of happiness or misery. The deathless strains of Ramsay, and of Burns, have long opposed, and still continue to oppose, a mighty barrier to this swelling land-flood, which, if it fertilizes the soil, effaces at the same time the hoary landmarks of ancient virtue. Having mentioned the names of these illustrious dead, to which might be added a bright band of the distinguished living, it is with the utmost diffidence, that the Author ventures to express a hope, that even his humbler efforts may likewise be instrumental in giving permanency to our so much, and so justly admired, national character : and if these Sketches, read by the weary peasant in the gloaming, may contribute to so desirable an object, he shall have gained all that he could wish, and more than he dares venture to hope.

It remains to offer a few observations with regard to the Sketches themselves. For the sake of variety, such incidents have been selected as required considerable diversity of character and sentiment. At the same time, to secure a strict

adherence to truth and nature, every Sketch is founded on incidents which either have fallen under the Author's own observation, or been gleaned from received tradition, or well-known pastoral songs. In those derived from the latter source, he has endeavoured to catch the characteristic spirit of the song; and, at the same time, feeling his subject already elevated above the level of common life, he deemed it right to adopt a more imaginative strain of thought and language, yet, as he thinks, within the boundaries of what is natural and becoming. Should it, nevertheless, be still objected, that in those the language is higher than can be supposed natural in the mouths of his characters: To this he would reply,—that this in part must be admitted; but not farther, than the same objection might be urged against every possible species of poetical composition. Kings and heroes, in general, do not, any more than peasants, speak the language of poetry. But admitting the necessity of idealising the thoughts and expressions to a certain extent, it may not be difficult to show, that there is not, in the present case,

much force in the objection. It might be enough to say, that every Scottish peasant can read and understand his Bible,—can relish the unapproachable beauty and sublimity of those sacred hymns breathed by the Poet-King of Israel, or the inspired Seer, whose lips were touched with fire from off the altar. But this is not all. On the same shelf with the sacred volume, may be almost universally seen such books as, Thomson's Seasons, Young's Night Thoughts, and Milton's Paradise Lost. What style must be regarded as too poetical for the man who can enjoy the beauties of Thomson;—too abstract and artificial for him who can comprehend the subtlety and antithesis of Young;—or too elevated for him, whose soul can soar with the mighty Milton? Such men, it may be affirmed, are the bulk of the Scottish peasantry; and to themselves the appeal is made, to ratify or condemn the statement.

I.

BESSY BELL AND MARY GRAY.

What arts he used I may not say,
 But when next he sung more blithe was the lay ;
 And oft he repeated the closing line,
 “ The maid that I love, she has vow'd to be mine !”

Jen. Ay, Johnnie ! Who'd have thought to hear
 from you
 A song of such sly meaning ? On my word,
 Some folk are ill to fathom !

John. Surely, lass,
 You do not think I'm made of fish ! I know
 The arch wiles of sweet woman ; and I love
 Her bashfulness, half nature, and half art.

Arch. Oh ! most of art ! Well know they that
 they are
 Most charming, when most sly and petulant.
 But Nancy, lass, 'tis your time next.

Nan. My time ?
 I cannot sing ! Will some one sing for me ?

Gudem. No ! You must sing yourself, or tell a
 tale,
 Or speak a speech, or to the well. No help.

Nan. You know I cannot sing !

Jen. I know you can—
 Or croon, at least ! So try !

Nan. Well, if I must !—
 Though well I know you'll mock my tuneless
 voice.

BESSY BELL AND MARY GRAY.

[The celebrated Bessy Bell and Mary Gray are buried on the banks of the Almond, near Lednoch (modernised into Lynedoch). The common tradition is, that the father of the former was laird of Kinvaid, in the neighbourhood of Lynedoch, and the father of the latter, laird of Lynedoch; that these two young ladies were both very handsome, and a most intimate friendship subsisted between them; that while Miss Bell was on a visit to Miss Gray, the plague broke out in the year 1666, in order to avoid which they built themselves a bower about three quarters of a mile west from Lynedoch, in a very retired and romantic place, called Burnbraes, on the side of Brauchie-burn. Here they lived for some time; but the plague raging with great fury, they caught the infection, it is said, from a young gentleman who was in love with them both, and here they died. Their burial-place is about half a mile west from the present house of Lynedoch.

Muse's Threnodie, Perth, 1774.]

SCENE I.

Lednoch House. (Spring.)

BESSY BELL. MARY GRAY.

M. Gray. Welcome to Lednoch! my sweet sister-friend!

Thrice welcome to my heart.

B. Bell. My dearest Mary!

Clasp'd in your arms, the heaving of my bosom
May tell my joy; but words and thanks are feeble.

M. Gray. Thou dear kind creature! but we two
have known

My heart is sick, mine ee is dim—
 I come, my love ! I come
 To share thy peaceful bed of rest ;—
 Thy calm and silent home !”

John. You had no need to be so shy : you’ve done
 Great justice to your song ; and to say that,
 Is to give no slight praise.

Nan. Nay, do not praise
 The singer for the song’s sake : ’Tis enough
 That it has served my turn.

Arch. It seems to be
 The very sister of my Ringlet song.
 Know ye aught of its story ?

Nan. Not a word.
 I learnt it from old Alice of the glen,
 And when I ask’d its story, she would sigh,
 And shake her head, but answer gave she none.

Gudem. Betty, my lass, ’tis come to you at last.
 I hope to hear your voice now :—Not a word
 Has cross’d your lips yet, I believe ; but now
 You must say something.

Bet. Well, gudeman, I’ll try.
 And for my silence, that can be no fault !
 For there are some, not very far to seek,
 Would rather meet, or I’m mistaken much,
 Great listeners than great talkers.

Gudem. Say you, lass !
 Upon my word, you’re a right cunning one
 For observation !—But your song.

To sadden, and to soften all my heart,
 Till I shall sigh like a young Zephyr ; weep
 Like the perpetual tricklings that distil
 Down mossy rocks, from ever-during springs ?
 Oh, come ! I've caught the spirit, I shall dote,
 Ere long, on deep, romantic solitude.

B. Bell. You airy jester ! Mock it as you will,
 I shall not love the beautiful retreats
 Of wildly-graceful Nature e'er the less ;
 Nor listen with less pleasure to a tale
 Of artless truth, fresh from the guileless heart,
 Through dread of your light laughter.

M. Gray. 'Tis no jest :
 I'm more than half converted to your taste,—
 In verity I am. There only wants
 A very, very little more of life,
 Of mirth, and of variety, to make
 A rural life quite charming.

B. Bell. I am glad
 That daily more and more our likings seem
 To meet and blend ; but yet I would not wish
 Them quite alike in all things ; 'twere to lose
 Variety of shading in one broad
 And dull monotony. But lo ! here comes
 Your lover, Drummond.

M. Gray. Nay, your lover too !

B. Bell. We'll say *our* lover then ; though, for my
 part,
 I have not seen him for—many a long day.

Gudem. Oh ! I must be excused. My part, you
know,

Is to keep others to their duty ;—that
If I have done, I've done my part.

Arch. Gudeman !

O, fy, gudeman ! Is that the way you treat
Your guests ? The country-side will ring
How the Gudeman of Hollinbraes is just
A perfect spoil-sport !

Gudem. That shall never be !
I'll try and hammer out a tale.

A TALE OF HALLOWEEN.

There was a lass—a bold and forward lass,—
Ready with tongue and hand ; nothing she fear'd,
Nothing regarded :—Tales of fairies, ghosts,
And all such things were her derision ; yet,
Strange though it seem, eager she was to try
All charms, spells, omens,—all that weak minds think
Predictive of the future. True, indeed,
She never dreamt of prying into fate
On any point but marriage ; and in that
She did but what most women long to do,
So far as boldness leads them. Well, it chanced
When Halloween came round, after some hours
Of sport and pastime held among the rest,
That she resolved to try one darker charm,—
One which excludes companionship. 'Twas thus :
Alone she went to find a running stream

Is mean, unworthy, even beneath contempt,
Unutterably valueless ?

Drum. Not so !

My very spirit glories in the power
And fervency of true, pure, generous love.
But what had I of love e'er known or dreamt,
Had I ne'er heard thy low and gentle voice ;
Ne'er seen the blue depth of thy thoughtful eye,
Breathing and beaming tenderest purity ?
Or had not Mary Gray's light-tripping tongue,
Dark locks, keen eye, and bounding, fawn-like form,
Fill'd all my soul with visions of bright beauty ?
Love is a spiritual philosophy ;
But woman is the glorious page where man
Must study, would he learn that heavenly lore.

M. Gray. What say you, sister-friend, are we
not beat ?— [*Aside to B. Bell.*

And do you think to take our credulous ears
With flattery, that most delicious poison ?
That were to steal a victory.

Drum. Such a triumph

I never dreamt of gaining ; for no man
Flatters, except he have some end in view
Which truth would fail to gain ; or think himself
Vastly superior to the empty thing
He flatters and deludes—unworthy motives !—
Motives, I ween, which never can be mine.

M. Gray. Well, we'll believe thou art a lover still,
A true romantic lover ; one whose heart
Asks no requital, thinks not of itself,
Loves merely for the pleasure of so loving.

My soul," said he, "felt all the agonies
 And tortures of the damn'd! Thou wicked woman!
 This evil-omen'd knife, this very hour,
 The vision's dark hint shall fulfil!" He said,
 And stabb'd her to the heart. She died; and he
 Went raving mad!

(*During this tale JOHNNY and NANNY, and
 ARCHY and JENNY, have been whispering
 apart.*)

Will. 'Tis a strange tale, gudeman!—
 And surely more incredible than mine.

Gudem. I know not that: I do not vouch its
 truth;—

But this I think, that those who rashly try
 To tamper with the Evil One, can meet
 Nothing but evil. O! 'tis very wrong
 To ask, even but in jest, for aid from him,
 Who always strives to work our ruin!

Gudew. Come,
 It's getting late; lasses leave off your work.
 Nanny, see all things right. Good night t'ye, lads.

Arch. Good night, gudewife. Good night, gude-
 man. Come, Bess,
 Look for your plaid: 'tis time we were at home:
 We must be up before the skreigh of day
 To-morrow for the mill. A kind good night
 To all that stay.

Jen. Well home to all that go!

[*Exeunt.*]

To them no strong untainted mountain gale
 Comes, bearing on its wing the dews of life ;
 No lark careering near the gates of morn
 Comes, like a sweet-tongued messenger, to tell
 Of Heaven's returning love and clemency ;
 Even the bright skies hang lurid o'er their heads.
 Oh ! how unlike the dome of stainless blue
 Gilded with sunbeams, smiling over us,
 With love and beauty most magnificent !
 Poor wretches ! Death is awful ! but to die
 In such a scene, where earth is one huge grave,
 The air a pestilence, and heaven's own brow
 Murky and scowling——'tis too horrible !

Drum. You paint it strongly ! Yet if even that
 were

The worst, it might be borne.

B. Bell. What can be worse ?

Drum. Man's heart is worse. Despair's foul de-
 mon-wing

Has flapp'd the feeble lamp of Conscience dark,
 Or utterly extinguish'd it. With look
 Malign, man eyes askance his fellow-man :
 With hollow cheek, and dim and sunken eyes,
 That glimmer in their sockets, the gaunt form
 Prowls round the precincts of the yawning grave,
 And robs the dead ; or, with lean, trembling hand,
 Murders an inch of life, and gripes the gold,
 And, while he hugs his horrid booty, dies.
 All sweet affinities, all tender bonds—
 Affection, love, relationship—all, all,
 Have fled from the polluted scene. The mother

Arch. In truth, gudeman, I scarce can tell ! We
seem

Playing at hide-and-seek ! I had a tryst
With my dear Jenny ; and, as I may guess,
Johnny and Nanny had a like tryst set :
We knew not of each other ; and like fools,
Here are we both, cuff'd, worried, and discover'd !

Gudem. Well, this beats all—Ha ! ha !

Gudew. This is no joke.

Lads, say, in sober truth, what want ye here ?
If nought dishonourable, come not thus
At such untimely hours, by stealth, to break
A decent family's repose, and raise
The country's clash about my daughters ! Speak,
And tell us what ye mean ?

John. For mine own part,
I mean nought, wish nought, but my Nanny's hand
In honourable marriage.

Arch. And for me,
I wish no less. Only I thought it best
To win the daughter's own consent before
I ask'd the mother's leave. Now, let me beg
That I may woo your daughter.

Gudem. Though we have
Reason to be offended—yet I think
Your fault may be forgiven. Lasses, you—
What say ye for yourselves ?—

Jen. Dear father, since
You speak so frankly, I shall be as frank.

Is pale and haggard, red and wild her eyes.
 In populous cities, where the mingled tide
 Of human life its fullest billow rolls,
 There hugest Ruin stalks, there reigns Dismay
 With all her frenzied train. Dunedin fair,
 Trembles upon her rocky throne; Dundee
 Mourns her lost thousands; ancient Perth groans
 deep,

As frequent funerals blacken o'er her streets :
 Green youth, strong manhood, drooping age, alike
 Betake them to the mountain solitudes,
 And distant glens, in headlong, fearful flight,
 There hoping to escape the blue destruction.—
 And now, charged with this tale of woe, I come
 To warn you, and to speed you hence, away
 To some remote retirement, where the gale,
 For ever freshen'd by the breezy speed
 Of some clear rushing stream, may yet repel
 The dire contagion, till the sultry heats
 Of Summer have departed, and the keen
 And vigorous winds of Winter shall arise
 To sweep afar the noxious exhalations,
 And pour a healthful renovating flood
 Of life, through the glad air.

M. Gray.

What can we do ?

Whither betake us ? Whither *can* we go ?
 Or why go any where ? We cannot fly
 A foe that dwells in Heaven's own blessed air,
 And kills us with a breath ! Let us even here
 Await our doom.

XII.

THE SNOW-STORM.

B. Bell. And there, my Mary,
How gladly could I live and die with thee!
Let us go thither!

Drum. Let it be my care
To build for you, sweet friends, a rural bower,
Where in calm safety you may dwell, nor dread
The breathing of the death-blight. To my task,
All light in hope, I go; soon to return
And lead you to a sweet, secure abode. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

The Bower.

BESSY BELL. MARY GRAY.

M. Gray. Yes, you are right, dear Bessy! all the
scenes
Of gayest mirth and highest splendour ne'er
Could fill the soul with such a perfect joy
As do the mild, the quiet beauties, of
This gentle solitude.

B. Bell. How glad am I
To hear you say so! And how happy you
Thus to have open'd freely all your bosom
To the bland influence of peaceful nature,
Our common mother, and our best instructress!

M. Gray. I can believe it; for I feel within
My heart a thousand large capacities
For happiness, that I had never else

THE SNOW-STORM.

SCENE I.

The Moor. (Advanced Winter.)

WILLIE *and* CHARLIE.

Wil. Charlie! Where are ye, Charlie? Rest a bit!

I cannot move another step!

Char. Cheer up!

We'll soon be through the deepest wreath, and then
The worst is past.

Wil. Where are we? Not a foot
Of the wild waste is like itself; the hills
Are scoop'd and rounded into thousand shapes
They never were before; the very streams
Are buried fifty fathoms deep; the glens
Smooth'd up by the white ruin. Lost, oh lost!

As there exists between his mind and yours,
Must needs ensure attachment.

B. Bell.

Not so sure :

And for that very reason ; for there is
A certain dissimilitude required
To make a complete harmony of minds,
As in all other things. And tell me, Mary,
Are not we two, think you, dearer friends
That, though on all points of deep serious import
We think and feel alike, the lighter shades,
That form the outlines of the character,
Are strikingly contrasted ?

M. Gray.

'Tis most true :

Yet he's so kind, so amiable, you cannot
Dislike him sure.

B. Bell.

Dislike him, Mary ! no :

I prize him as a more than friend,—a brother !
We are so similar, I ever feel
As if there were some tie of undefined
But close relationship, forbidding love,
Yet giving something dearer far than friendship.

M. Gray. 'Tis a strange feeling !

B. Bell.

'Tis, perhaps ; but yet

Not the less true, and strong, and permanent.
But tell me, since there cannot be with you
Such a too-closely-kindred sympathy
Of mind, do not you love him ?

M. Gray.

Why, I think,—

I'm almost sure,—I do not. Yet I'm sure
I would not lose his friendship for the world.

Wil. Rest ! No, let us move on ! Alas ! I feel Weak, very weak ! Here must I stay and die !

Char. But did your little Fanny seem indeed Better this morning ?

Wil. Fanny ! my dear child !
Yes, she is better ! While my Lucy sought
My plaid, I knelt beside her bed, and gazed
On the sweet infant's face. Her brow was calm,—
Pale, but quite calm ; her eyes were closed ; but life
Shone fresh through their transparent coverings ;
Her cheek was peaceful, and her gentle breath
Raised her fair bosom mildly, healthfully,—
No pain disturbing her soft sleep :—I touch'd
With lightest kiss her silent lip, and thank'd
The gracious Being, who alone can give
Repose to suffering mortals ! Shall we yet
Meet, and together praise him ? O ! no, no !
My limbs are powerless, and my heart is sick !
Charlie, what can we do ?

Char. Trust in that voice
That stills the tempest !—in that mighty hand
That snatch'd his doubting follower from the wave !
And strong in him go forth, surmounting all
Our present dangers !

Wil. Yes, in him I trust
For future bliss, but not for longer life.
For I bethink me now, that yesterday,
About this very hour,—my soul had been
Sad for my Fanny's illness,—while I sat
And eyed the far horizon's verge, where glared

As we love him,—'tis a fraternal passion ;
At least I hope so.

M. Gray. Well, he'll soon be here,
And we can wind him, till insensibly
He shall unfold the secret of his heart ;
Else are we no true women.

B. Bell. We may try :
Meanwhile, shall we break off our walk ? the bank
Receives the noon-tide sun so fervidly,
'Twere better to betake us to our bower
Till lengthen'd shadows fling their mantle cool
Across the greensward ; and the conscious flowers
Fold up their blossoms, and decline their heads,
To sleep among the gentle, freshening dews,
Till dawn and the lark's song shall bid them wake.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

*The Banks of Brauchie Burn, a short distance from
the Bower. (Evening.)*

DRUMMOND *alone.*

Drum. How very still and beautiful ! Sure Health
Must spread her mantle o'er this lovely glen,
Sheltering it still from every evil breath
Of rank contagion. If a spot there be

SCENE II.

*The Farm-house.**The GUEDEMAN—The MINISTER.*

Min. 'Twas well that I was near your house,
gudeman,

When this wild wind began ! I never could
Have found my way across the pathless moor,
Through this thick-whirling mass of drifting snow.

Gudem. It was indeed, sir. But you're very wrong
To venture out so far afield, in such
Rough winter weather !

Min. When my duty calls
'Tis mine to follow ; and to leave the rest
To the wise ordering of Providence.

Gudem. But do you think, sir, every thing we do,
And every thing that happens us, is ruled
By Providence for some wise end ?

Min. I do,
Most certainly ; and that for purposes
Both wise and merciful !

Gudem. But some slight things,
Some accidents—

Min. No ! nothing can be slight,
Nor accidental ! *We* cannot foresee
The bearing of events ; but, if we could,

How fare you, and how pass the hours along?
Slowly and heavily, or wing'd with pleasure?

M. Gray. Mark'st thou that, Bessy?. This ro-
mantic youth

Commenced in polish'd terms a fair address;
His high-aspiring muse soar'd to the skies,
But, lo! unable to maintain her flight,
Soon stoops her feeble wing.

B. Bell. Fie, Drummond, fie!

I never could have thought that you would thus
Have unadvisedly betray'd the cause
Of bright romance. Redeem your honour, sir!
Regain the rose-buds from your chaplet reft,
Or live a craven knight.

Drum. So spoke the Bruce,
Nor did he speak in vain. I thank thee, Lady!
My vantage-ground already is recover'd,
And victory must be mine. Yes, my fair foe!
You might, and justly, ridicule the taste
That should attempt to people Scotia's glens
With Nymphs and Goddesses, the bright creation
Of Grecian poesy: yet not the less
Yield I the full strong credence of my mind,
And all the deepest feelings of my heart,
Willingly to that sacred influence
Which heartless worldlings, scoffing, term romantic.

M. Gray. Suppose me then a disputant, or rather
Suppose me a disciple,—pray what *is*,
In origin and bearing, this romance
Which you esteem so highly?

Enter CHARLIE.

Well, how fend the flocks?—

I fear right badly. Silent! What is wrong?—
How wild he looks! He cannot speak! Good Heaven!
Some dreadful thing has happen'd! Where is Willie?

Char. He's—O! Gudeman! he's lost! He'll die!
Help, help!

Gudem. Where is he? Where? How can we
help? Speak, speak!—

Char. He's wreathed by this time in the snow!—
I've left

His own dog, Burly, with him. Haste, make haste!
I'll lead you to the spot: get help to bear
Him home! We yet may save his life! Haste, haste!
O! his poor family!

Gudem. Come, let us all
Speed to his rescue.

Min. Lo, the wind abates!
I'll hie me to his cottage. Now, gudeman,
Behold the errand which my Master has
Sent me upon! To pour the balm of hope
And comfort on the stricken mourner's soul.
O! He is ever-merciful, even when
His chastening hand is heavy.

[*Exeunt.*

A holy rapture rises in his breast,
And glows along each nerve, till his whole frame
Feels like a flower expanding in the sun !
This is romantic !—be it so !—If, then,
He scarce can bear to brush the diamond dew
From the green grass, and picks his wary steps
Lest he should crush the wild-flower, could he bear,
In deed, or word, or thought, to do foul wrong
To man, his mortal brother ? When the sun
Rides high in the mid-heaven, in some deep glen,
Where rocks project, and mossy caverns yawn,
Through tangling brushwood all alone he strays,
Listening the brawlings of the rippling brook,
Mix'd with the intermittent song of birds
Hid in their shady covert ; o'er his mind
Light falls the veily calm of purest peace,—
(Peace with his own soul and with all the world,)
And love, even to its least existencies—
Sweet singing birds, trees with their bloomy boughs,
And that fair populace, by Nature's hand
In lavish charms array'd, the flowery tribe—
Till his heart heaves involuntary sighs
Of gratitude to that benignant Power
That placed him in a world so beautiful.
This, too, is all romantic !—be it so !
Can he whose bosom pants with the excess
Of all-refining sensibilities,
Can *he* stoop from the lofty eminence
Of friendship with the universal Mother,
Cramp all his finer feelings, and imprison

His soul in that dark dungeon *Self*, for all
The little paltry gains that worldlings toil for?—
Or see him when the humid hand of Even
Casts wide her shadowy mantle o'er the plain,
Drawing its folds gradually up the hills,
As day's departing lustre fades away,
And dews, soft as an infant's evening prayer
When by her tender mother's side she kneels,
Fill all the air with sense of gentler life,
Even till a sympathetic moisture floats
Over the silent wanderer's pensive eye!
And as the night comes on, and star by star
Enkindles its eternal lamp on high,
Beaconing the heavenward traveller to the home
Of everlasting peace, and bliss, and love:
Oh! how the world, and all its mean pursuits,
Its empty pleasures, and debasing passions,
Sink into utter insignificance,
Till the enlarged soul spurns earthly ties,
And with seraphic ardour re-asserts
Its heavenly birth, and glorious destiny!
Even this is term'd romantic!—poor despite
That grovelling minds display, scoffing in vain
At pure and rapturous delights, far, far
Beyond their feeble comprehension! Go,
Ye poor despisers of mysterious nature,
And hide your littleness! Go, drudge and moil
For veriest trash! Go, herd among the crowd
Of Mammon's slaves! Let not your steps be found
Insulting the majestic solitudes,

Where uncontaminated minds yet hold
 Lofty and solemn converse—through the love,
 The beauty, and the grandeur which pervade
 And o'er-inform the universe—with Him
 The Omnipotent, All-merciful Creator!—
 Forgive me, ladies, if enthusiasm
 Have carried me too far.

B. Bell. No, Drummond, no !
 Forgiveness ! Our warm thanks are your just meed !

M. Gray. I must become—I *am*, a willing convert
 To such a glorious and ennobling creed.
 But, tell me, Drummond, how would you defend
 That strong attachment to particular scenes
 Which forms no trivial part of the romantic ?

Drum. It scarcely needs defence.—It is a bond
 Between the living and the dead—a spell
 Evoking all of lovely, good, and great,
 That e'er have cast a grace, a dignity,
 A glory all-imperishable, o'er
 The scenes that gave them birth, or saw their deeds :
 And when we tread that hallow'd ground, our souls,
 Kindling, acquire the sacred inspiration,
 Making their virtues ours. Breathes there a man
 Whose soul can harbour villainous intents
 Against sweet maiden-innocence, while near
 The grave where lies the young, the beautiful,
 The famed in tender song ? Or who could dare,
 With lawless purpose, or hands stain'd in guilt,
 To violate the sanctity which reigns
 Where calmly sleeps the grey-hair'd patriarch ?

And who can tread the memorable fields,
 Where Freedom's battle has been fought and won,
 Nor feel thy mighty spirit, Independence,
 Great in his bosom? Is there—can there be,
 A Scot who can behold red Luncarty,
 Nor think he sees the hoary tumuli
 Teem with the shades of his great ancestors?
 Or who can steal, with sneaking, craven foot,
 O'er ground that echoed once the undaunted tread
 Of Wallace, Liberty's own chosen son?
 No! while we breathe the air that proudly waved
 Old Scotia's banner on thy fated field,
 Triumphant Bannockburn! we must be free!—
 Thus, then, my fair disciple, I defend
 The strong attachment to particular scenes:
 And these, I trust, will still accumulate,
 Speeding our country on her high career,
 Ever the foremost in the march divine
 Of glorious deed and lofty sentiment.

B. Bell. What think you now of the romantic,
 Mary?

M. Gray. That my endeavour it shall daily be
 Still deeper to imbibe its noble spirit.

Drum. I'm glad to hear you say so. Well I know
 'Twill people all your lonely solitude
 With an infinity of loveliest forms,
 Embodied joys, visions ethereal,
 Making it quite a paradise.

M. Gray.

I hope

It will be so. But meanwhile come with us
And share such comforts as it can afford.

Drum. I thank you: but just now that may not be;
A most important duty calls me hence.

M. Gray. Attend your duties certainly: but yet,
If I might hint, a young man often hides
Under that name what pleasure dictated.—
What, if some lady-fair expects her lover?

Drum. You do not, and you cannot think so! Now,
When death is stalking o'er the prostrate land,
Reveal'd in all his terrors, 'tis no time
For the light dalliance, and gay gallantries,
Misnamed by worldlings, love. Besides, my heart
Has long been prescient of that destiny
Which now it feels approaching:—fate will have
Its course,—and I may love, but never can
My heart enjoy the heaven of mutual love.

B. Bell. You bode too darkly: sure there may be
found

Some worthy of your love, and not unwilling
To meet it with a mutual flame.

Drum. No, no!

I feel that may not be!

M. Gray. Why may it not?

I fear you are too difficult to please.

Pray now describe to us what you would wish
In her whom you would honour with your love.

Drum. How shall I picture female excellence?
(For such each lover deems the fair he loves.)

An eye that speaks and sparkles full of soul,
 Or one whose softer light shows a far depth
 Of tenderest, purest feelings :—locks that float
 Like clouds of midnight o'er a brow like morn,
 Or like the golden radiance of the west
 Streaming around the setting sun :—a form
 Tall, stately, queen-like in its elegance ;
 Or one of light and fairy gracefulness :—
 A tongue whose silver tones give ready life
 To the bright music of a lively mind ;
 Or one that, like an echo to the soul,
 Breathes soft and low its mild and thoughtful words :
 These charms and qualities in peerless union,
 Or either, were the other all unknown,
 Would meet my amplest wish, and ever reign
 In fullest sovereignty, my bosom's Queen.

B. Bell. Just as I thought ; he has described us
 both,

A little overcharged, I own, but yet
 The general outline is distinct enough.

(*Aside to M. Gray.*)

Nay, Drummond, even I must blame such warmth
 Of colouring : You must never hope to meet
 Such an assemblage of most rare endowments
 Combined in one frail mortal.—And say, why
 Is still your picture double ?

Drum. 'Tis because
 As gay or pensive feelings sway my mind,
 So reigns one or the other in my heart :
 And were it mine to fix my final choice

Upon the one, and to reject the other,
Perplexity extreme would wring my soul.

M. Gray. Be thankful, then, that fate commiserates

Your fickleness, and does not force such choice.
Can you come with us yet? Or does your duty
Withhold you still?

Drum. More urgent grow its calls.
I must, howe'er unwillingly, depart.

B. Bell. I half may guess the cause. No little part
Of these your duties is your care for us.
Before you go, permit me to declare,
That though in light strain we have idly talk'd,
Yet not the less feel we our weighty debt
Of gratitude to you for all your kindness;
And not the less long we to hear that health
Has flung again its gladdening banner free,
To all the winds of our dear native land.
Oh! quickly then return, and may you bring
With you glad tidings of the general weal!

Drum. I hope I shall do so! Adieu, sweet ladies!

Both. Adieu, dear friend! may Providence protect you!

[*Exit Drummond.*]

M. Gray. What ought we now to do? 'Tis but
too plain,
As you surmised, that Drummond loves us both.

B. Bell. Even as we have done formerly,—to him
And to each other be true sisters still;
While his pure mind and delicate regard,

I know, will make him still to us a brother.
 Thus shall we, during our retirement, taste
 The joys of a most generous affection ;
 And if we live to witness better days,
 Heaven will not, we may trust, forsake us then,
 But still direct our conduct for the best.

M. Gray. Such be our rule of acting, then :—a rule
 Not more romantic than 'tis rational.

But lo, the dews fall heavy ; every flower
 And every blade of grass is deeply wet—
 I fear the chilly damp may do you harm :—
 Come, let us wend to our lone Hermitage.

B. Bell. Say rather, our delightful Maiden-Bower!
 [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

The interior of the Bower. (Morning.)

BESSY BELL. MARY GRAY.

M. Gray. Come, will you take a walk this lovely
 morning ?

I hear the mavis in the underwood,
 On Almond's banks, pouring his mellow lay
 In richest modulation ; 'tis a call
 'Gainst which you surely will not close your ear.

B. Bell. Well as I love to hear the mavis sing,

Cheering his brooding mate, not at this time
Shall I seek other pleasure.

M. Gray.

Wherefore not ?

You are a truant to romance ! Come, come,
You shall not thus escape me, you must come.

B. Bell. Sweet Mary, cease ; my mind is not on
mirth.

When, think you, may we look for Drummond here ?
Would he were come !

M. Gray.

Why so ?

B. Bell.

Because there has

Risen on my mind a sense of exigence
Requiring my return home to Kinvaid
Upon the instant.

M. Gray.

Sure you jest ! yet no ;—

There lurks no hidden mirth within your eyes—
Mirth ! they are sunk and lustreless ! Alas !
My sister-friend, I fear you are not well !

B. Bell. Dismiss your fears. 'Tis but anxiety
That dims mine eye. Would I were at Kinvaid !

M. Gray. Anxiety ? and why ? Now solemnly
Do I entreat you, by the memory
Of all our faith and love, tell me the truth !
Are you indeed unwell ?

B. Bell.

Perhaps I am

A little so ; a walk may do me good.

M. Gray. Why then not walk with me ?

B. Bell.

Because, my Mary,

Drummond is abler to support my steps
Should I grow weary.

M. Gray. Ah! it will not do;
 That forced and melancholy smile, and these
 Half-playful words so feebly murmur'd out,
 Divulge your secret.—Yes, I know it all.
 You think that you have caught the plague-infection,
 And lest it seize me too, you would depart
 To die untended and alone. Is this
 The truth? You know it is.

B. Bell. Thus tenderly
 Assail'd by true affection's warm appeal,
 I shall not now dissemble. I must own
 I'm ill at ease; and it is my intent,
 Ere the disease have wither'd all my strength,
 To hie me hence. Why should I cause your death?

M. Gray. Then hear me! Whatsoe'er your fate,
 no power
 But death itself shall tear you from my heart!
 And should disease with her cold blighting hand
 Gripe your kind heart, and shroud your gentle brow,
 I'll tend you as a mother tends her child,
 Her first-born and her only. Have we been
 Sisters in love, while o'er us shone the sun
 Of glad prosperity, and shall we shrink
 Coldly asunder when the adverse clouds
 Of darkening trouble lower? It shall not be.

B. Bell. Dear Mary, sister of my soul! I yield:
 And though I dread thy danger, yet I own
 Such proofs of deep, disinterested love
 Are manna to my soul. Yet, oh! 'tis hard

To leave thee, as I feel I must, and soon,
Beloved as thou art.

M. Gray. Nay, say not so!
Come with me now, and walk a little space—
The fresh air will revive you.

B. Bell. Never, Mary!
The fresh, free air, the flowers upon the fields,
The song of birds, the music of clear brooks,
The mighty voice of winds, the boundless cope
Of the blue sky, the glorious light of day,
No more can kindle up the ecstatic fires
Of fervency, and hope, and love in me,
As they were wont, till the strong rapture cast
The sense of sickness from my languid frame—
The hand of death is on me.

M. Gray. Droop not yet!
One effort more, and you may yet throw off
This fit of faintness.

B. Bell. Mary, lay me down,
And place my head that I may see the light,
And feast my dying eyes, while they wax dim,
With a few glimpses more of lovely Nature.
Now I am easier! thank you, my sweet friend;
And leave me for a little:—there are thoughts
And communings between the soul and Him
Who gave it and recalls, that have their course
Freest in utter solitude. Meanwhile
The open air will do you good.

(*While Mary retires to another part of the cot-
tage, out of her sight, she remains for a while*

*in silent prayer, then slowly opens her eyes,
and endeavours to look around.)*

How weak,

How very weak, I am ! sure death is near.
Oh ! little do they know of death, who crowd
Thousands of gloomy, dreadful images,
All ghastly and abhorrent, into one
Dark form, and call the fearful phantom Death !
It is a messenger from Heaven, and bound
Upon an errand of eternal peace.
Even now, methinks I faintly hear its call,
Like the uncertain sound of distant music.
I come, I come ! Farewell, sweet Mary Gray !

M. Gray. Not yet ! not yet ! Oh ! stay a little
while,

And take me with you !

B. Bell. What ! return'd again ?

My kind attentive nurse ! Methinks 'tis dark :—
Tell me, is the sky curtain'd with deep clouds ?

M. Gray. There's not a cloud in all the sunny
dome,

And not a breath to stir the quivering leaf
Of the light aspen ; all creation sleeps
In smiling, blissful, sabbath-like repose.

B. Bell. 'Tis strange ! I've often thought that I
could wish

To die on such a day as you describe ;
And now Heaven grants my prayer : Come nearer,
And let me look once more on that dear face
Ere mine eyes close for ever : let me feel

Thy hand.—Alas ! it trembles and it burns !
 And thou hast sacrificed thy life for me !
 And who will tend thy death-bed ? Oh, this is
 Indeed the bitterness of death !

M. Gray. Oh ! calm

Thy mind. Let no regretful thoughts of me
 Shake thy life's ebbing sands. All will be well.
 I'm not ill yet ; and if I should be so,
 'Tis from the infection in the general air,
 And not from tending you that I have caught it.
 Why do you shrink and shudder so ?

B. Bell. I see

You sick and comfortless :—no tender hand
 To smooth your pillow, to support your head,
 To moisten your parch'd lips ! Oh, how my soul
 Shudders with grief and horror at the scene !

M. Gray. Where is your trust in Providence ?

Can you—

You, whose calm hopes have ever been reposed
 Immovably on Him who can support,—
 Can you permit despondency to seize
 Your soul in such a moment ? Think on Him,
 And on his gracious word !

B. Bell. Thank you, dear friend !

Dearer, if possible, than ever now,
 My hopes are all restored ; and I can leave
 Both your fate and my own to Him who knows
 Our wants, and will supply them. Oh ! that pang !
 It pass'd across my heart-strings with a gripe
 That shrivell'd as it went.

Sends his bright messengers to call me hence :—

Amid the music of their golden harps,

The beaming love of their celestial eyes,

And the deep fervour of their holy words,

I feel the fragments of mortality

Fall from around my freed, enraptured soul !

Farewell the world ! Farewell a while to thee !

A little, but a little while, farewell ! [*Dies.*

M. Gray. Farewell, thou sainted spirit ! As thou
saidst,

A little, but a little while, farewell !

'Twill not be long ! The strength of sacred love

That bore me up to watch thy dying hour

Is fast departing ;—soon I'll be as thou art.

And have I seen thee die, and shed no tears ?

Yet, tears were traitors to my heart, had they

Deprived me of the power to render aid

In thine extremity. One duty more

Remains ; let me arrange thy stiffening limbs,

Then lay me down beside thee—ne'er to rise

Till time has run his course, and Death is dead.

[*While she is busied about the body, DRUM-
MOND speaks from without.*

Drum. My gentle friends, good morning ! may I
enter ?

Or shall I longer tarry your permission ?

M. Gray. Come in, kind Drummond !

[*He enters ; she points to the body ; he
stands mute with grief.*

Yes, it is too true !

She sleeps the sleep of death ! and you have come
To do for me what I have done for her :—
Scarce need I blush now—Death ends all distinctions.

Drum. This is a sight—and these are words—
enough

To rend the hardest heart. Oh ! what means this ?

M. Gray. Lay me beside that gentle, slumbering
form.

Now,—ere I die, let me make one request,—
And you must grant it, Drummond, 'tis my last.

Drum. What is it that I would not grant you,
Mary ?

Name it, and be obey'd.

M. Gray. Nay, 'tis not much.

Let plain sincerity direct my words ;
Aught else were now ill-timed. We saw your love,
And gave you in return—'twas all we could—
The truest friendship :—and I see you now
Alone in this cold world. I know the strength
Of your warm feelings, and I dread the effect.
Yield not to woe's wild dictates : 'tis a fiend
Tempting frail man to strive against his Maker.
The ways of Providence, to our weak minds
Mysterious and dark, are merciful :
'Tis ours humbly to say, Thy will be done !
Let us be buried near our favourite walk
On lovely Almond's flowery banks : then go
And leave this spot and all its memories,—
Go to thy fellow-men, and pass thy life
In deeds of virtue and benevolence :

And fear not, we shall meet again in Heaven.
 Dear friend, you will grant this, my last request?

Drum. And would you have me drag a lingering
 life

Amid a heartless world that loves me not,
 And that I cannot love? yet this I promise :
 So far as it depends on mine own will
 I shall obey you. Life has been to me
 A tissue of afflictions ; lighter some
 Than others, but still wearing, each and all,
 The sombre hue of sorrow : from this hour
 Ne'er can it know variety of shade—
 Hail, henceforth, universal, rayless gloom !

M. Gray. For shame, my friend, for shame ! this
 is unmanly,

And most unchristian ! I did expect
 Better of you : why would you vainly writhe
 In feeble strife against the will of Heaven ?

Drum. Mary, I know it foolish, feel it wrong :—
 But, oh ! 'tis hard to have our little all
 Rent from our hearts. Yet God is wise and good,
 And works in darkness as in light ! I yield
 Submiss to His decrees.

M. Gray. 'Tis over now!

The pestilence has done its work ! Farewell !
 Drummond, death is not terrible to those
 Whose home is not this world, whose hope is raised
 Above all perishing existences,
 And fix'd on that which cannot change or die.
 I would not give this hour and its high hopes,

SCENE V.

The Grave of BESSY BELL and MARY GRAY.

DRUMMOND *alone.*

Drum. My task is done! And what is now to me
 The world—mankind—life—death—or any thing?
 What am I to myself?
 A record of what might have been, but was not!—
 A spectral semblance of what is, and is not!—
 A breathing form, dead at the heart, that dies not!—
 I am a fear, a wonder to myself,
 Stricken and blasted to the core!—cease, cease,
 Ye smouldering fires of fate!—And thou, my soul,
 Be still, and learn to yield thee to thy doom!—
 Oh! what a precious spot of earth is this,
 With its two little, narrow, grassy mounds!
 There sleep the Young, the Beautiful, the Good!
 But goodness, beauty, youth, could not avail
 The fell destroyer's progress to arrest!
 Oh! who, that had beheld them in their bloom,
 Glowing with all the loveliness of life,
 Could, even in his gloomiest moods of mind,
 Have ever dreamt their death so near?—Death—
 death—
 Full of mysterious import is that word!
 Breathed over recent graves, it is a spell

To call forth the departed ; or to bear
Our souls beyond the limits of this world,
With all its scenes and beings palpable,
Into the land of shadows, doubts, and fears—
The land of hopes, of glories, and of truths !
Death !—Yes, I feel its presence. Errors, mists,
And prejudices, from my mental sight
Depart, and truth, severe but glorious, beams
Upon my soul. O World ! how false thou art !
How hollow are thy pleasures ! In thy joys
How treacherous ! Nought hast thou but it bears
The bias or the stamp of evil. Love,
That even in thee some faint resemblance claims
To what it was erewhile in Paradise,—
To what hereafter it shall be in Heaven,—
Even Love, alas ! full oft misleads the heart.
Ye two fair creatures ! never purer love
Glow'd in man's bosom, than in mine for you ;
And had ye lived and own'd a mutual flame,
This world—this fleeting, vain, and worthless world,
Had been the all of Heaven my soul had sought.
I, like a blind idolater, had bow'd
Prostrate before the Creature, and forgot
The Great Creator. Thou hast been to me,
O Death ! the best of friends. And thou hast been
To them no foe in hastening them away,
To the abodes of everlasting bliss,
Ere life had grown a languor, or a pain.
Death !—'tis our second birth. Disease, or age,
Shatters and rends that mortal encrustation,

In which our prison'd spirits darkly dwell ;
Death bursts it, and, like insect newly fledged,
The soul, assuming powers that dormant lay,
Into another and a nobler life—
A life that dreads no death—exulting springs.
Then happy are the dead !—Let me not say
The dead—happy are they who die no more !
But do they—do these human souls, amid
The wonders and the glories of their state
Of new existence—do they e'er revert
To scenes, and loves, and friendships of this world ?
Does not some touch of human feelings still
Tremble and glow in their immortal natures ?
Can those strong ties that seem'd not of the earth ;—
Can Love, which triumph'd unimpair'd, even when
The mortal frame lay in the grasp of death,
Die with the body which it seem'd not of,
And lie with it, perishing in the grave ?
I will not think so !—In the human soul
The essence of humanity must still
Imperishably dwell, to be restored
To its lost purity, when the last pang
Hath sever'd it from its abode of dust,
And guilt, and misery ;—and from that land
Of perfect peace, full often do they bend
Their pitying eyes upon this world of woe,
And on the toils, sorrows, and sufferings,
That wage unceasing warfare on mankind.
Oh ! yes ! And often, sure, unseen they bathe
The throbbing brow of misery, and pour

Ethereal balm upon the sufferer's heart !
Have I not felt upon mine own sad breast
Fall an unwonted, and a holy calm,
I knew not whence or wherefore, till my soul
Smiled at afflictions ? And I look'd to Heaven,
And to the earth around me, and I felt
On me, and with me, the mysterious powers
Of that high world to come—the World of Spirits !
Ye sister-spirits, newly enter'd there !
Do ye behold me from your bower of bliss ?
And do your viewless hands even now prepare
To touch the master-chords of my jarr'd heart,
And tune its tones to soft harmonious peace ?
'Tis done ! 'tis done ! and I repine no more.
That lone, deserted bower, and these twin graves,
Shall they be all forgot ? Shall future times
Of them know nothing ? No ! while flowery spring
Shall prank the greensward gay ; while summer suns
Shall flush the full-blown blossoms on the boughs ;
While autumn shall heap high her mellow fruits ;
And savage winter wrap his brow in storms,
So long shall youths and gentle maidens come
In pensive pilgrimage to view the Bower,
And Graves of Bessy Bell and Mary Gray.
For me !—Ha !—o'er my heart a sickness spreads,—
A red pang shoots :—My race on earth is run.
But let me not pollute this sacred spot
With aught less sacred.—And there is one hand—
A Mother's—that must close mine eyes in death ;
Scarce would she else rest quiet in her grave,

So yearns her heart on me, her only Son.
Earth ! in the certainty of faith and hope,
To thee these hallow'd relics I intrust :
I charge thee keep them till the day of doom
In deep, inviolable sanctity !
Farewell ! Farewell !

[*Exit.*

II.

THE LOWLAND LASS

AND THE

HIGHLAND LAD.

Oh, she's cast aff her bonnie shoon
Made o' the Spanish leather ;
And she's put on her Highland brogues
To skip among the heather.

And she's cast aff her bonnie gown
A' wrought wi' gowd and satin ;
And she's put on a tartan plaid
To sport among the braken.

Old Ballad.

THE LOWLAND LASS

AND THE

HIGHLAND LAD.

SCENE I.

A Farm-house in the vicinity of Dumfries.

(Evening.—Spring.)

GUDEMAN, GUDEWIFE, GRANDFATHER, PEGGY, &c.

Gudem. Peggy, the fire's but weak; a night like
this

Requires a good one. Peggy! do you hear?
I think the lassie's deaf!

Peg. What did ye want?

Gudem. What did I want? Have ye been dream-
ing, lass?

What ails the creature? Such a woe-begone
And broken-hearted look I've seldom seen.

Peg. There's nothing ails me, father, that I know;

Only I feel a very weary weight
Growing upon my heart and spirits.

Gudem.

Stuff!

Pure nonsense! Shake it off! Come, lilt us up
Some canty song! That is the best of cures
For melancholy.

Peg.

No, I cannot sing,—

Indeed I cannot, father. Easier far
It were to bend my dowie head and weep.

Gudem. Why would you weep?

Peg.

Because my heart is sad;

Though why, I know not.

Grand.

Chide her not. Such things

As sinkings of the heart, indefinite
And dreary bodings, do not come for nought;
They are the rack, rent from the coming storm
By the fierce winds, and gliding o'er the sky,
Dim harbingers of danger, pain, and woe.

Gudem. Nay, you are worse than she is! Lassie,
come!

Quit your grave moods, and let us have a song,
Of any kind you choose.

Peg.

If I must sing,

I'll sing the song that the brave Highlanders
So often sung as they were on their march,
To and from England. And, to tell the truth,
Its tune runs strangely in my mind just now.

Gudem. That may do well enough; any will do,
So that you only sing.

PEGGY SINGS.—(Air, *Lochaber.*)

Farewell to Lochaber ! farewell to Strath Spey !
 To the land of the lake, and the far-winding bay,
 Of the mountain, the torrent, the cliff, and the stream,
 Where bound the red deer, and the grey eagles scream ;
 To the glen, the wild pine, and the heath's purple bell,
 To the homes, and the cairns of our Fathers, farewell !
 A deep boding gloom dark Ben Nevis hangs o'er,
 And we'll may-be return to Lochaber no more !

Farewell the chill sadness that clasp'd, like a shroud,
 The heart, hand, and eye of the brave and the proud !
 At the voice of our Prince each bold bosom heaves high,
 Each chief his broad banner flings free to the sky ;
 The wild echoes ring o'er the dark-waving heath,
 As the shrill pibroch hails us to glory or death ;
 Disgrace lowers behind us, and Danger before,—
 We'll may-be return to Lochaber no more !

Farewell to our lone homes in Glen or in Strath,
 Loud swells the Clan muster ! On, on is our path !
 It speaks not of chase or of banquet to-day,
 To the red strife of heroes it call us away.
 Unsheathe the claymore, and gripe firmly the targe,
 On, on ! ye brave clansmen ! On, on to the charge !
 Victorious return, as your sires did of yore,—
 Defeated—return to Lochaber no more !

Gudem. Now are you better, lassie ?

Peg. Father, no !

I fear some dreadful thing hangs o'er us !—

Gudew. Hush !

Deep in the gleaming ridge of bayonets
 The deadly broadsword hew'd ; there was a burst—
 A charge—a roaring whirl of desperate strife—
 A yell of rage and agony—a shout
 Of swelling triumph ; like a thunder-cloud
 Shatter'd asunder by the burning force
 Of its own muster'd bolts, the Highland clans
 Charged—waver'd—broke—and fled in hopeless
 rout,

Pursued and slaughter'd o'er the gory plains
 By their remorseless enemy. My heart
 With horrid sympathy join'd in the shout
 Of the triumphant victors, till my sleep
 Was broke by mine own voice.

Peg. 'Twas a wild dream !

What may it bode ?

(*The door burst open.*) *Enter MITCHELL.*

Mit. Preserve us all ! I've seen
 A fearful sight !

Grand. What sight ?

Mit. Give me a draught
 Of water quickly ! Heaven preserve us all !

Gudew. What is the matter ?

Mit. Some most dreadful thing
 Has happen'd, or will happen soon, I fear !

Grand. Tell us, what have you seen ?

Mit. As I came o'er
 The fields from the next town, where I had spent
 An hour or two since gloaming, the swift moon
 Seem'd racing o'er the sky through the grey garb
 Of broken cloud-rack ; on a sudden, dark

And darker grew the night—a wailing moan
 Rose, sunk, and rose again, and louder swell'd
 Into a shrill wild scream, then died away
 In low and broken sobs; the black cloud burst,
 And thick as snow-flakes thro' the burden'd air
 A shower of Highland bonnets fell—Look not
 As if incredulous!—I say, a shower
 Of Highland bonnets!—Nay, so perfectly
 Was I convinced of what they were, I stoop'd
 To lift one by the tuft—my fruitless grasp
 Pass'd through the vision! Terror-struck, I fled
 Eager to see once more the cheering face
 Of human beings, and material things!*

Gudew. What can all these things mean?

Grand. I think they mean
 Destruction to the rebel Highland clans.

Peg. Call them not *rebels*, grandfather! they fight
 For him whom they esteem their lawful king:
 They may be wrong; but thus to risk their lives
 For an unfriended Prince,—it is, at least,
 The error of most noble, generous minds!

Grand. So says romance; but well I ween we
 have
 Small cause to risk our lives for Charles Stuart,
 Or any of his race! We shall not soon
 Forget by whose command grey-headed age,
 Strong manhood, speechless infancy, all, all

* The tradition of a visionary shower of Highland bonnets is still current in Nithsdale.

Of every age and sex, with barbarous
 And wanton cruelty, on their own hearths
 Were violated, butcher'd ; hunted forth
 Like wild beasts to the mountains—Witness there
 The moss-grown martyr's stone! Ay, while the hills,
 Glens, moors, and mosses shall endure, so long
 Shall live the execrated memory
 Of those red-handed monsters ; and of him
 Whose tyrant-voice halloo'd them on ! so long
 Shall live the hallow'd, the revered names
 Of those true Christian men, who nobly shed
 Their blood in the great cause of liberty,
 Civil and sacred ! Yes, that race is doom'd !
 They cannot prosper : and all those who lend
 Them aid must with them perish.

Gudem.

It may be !

'Tis very likely !

Peg.

What may be the fate
 Of our protector, Lewis ?

Gudem.

Much I fear

A bloody one indeed ! Kind, gallant youth !
 Deep is the debt of gratitude we owe
 To his protection from the ravening hands
 Of his wild followers. Would that we could now
 In kind repay it.

Peg.

Oh ! I wish we could !

But the dark bodings of my heart forbid
 The indulgence of such hopes.

Grand.

Dark are the ways
 Of Providence, but wise ! Then let us leave

The clearing up of these strange mysteries
 To time and Heaven's high will ! Come, let us all
 Prepare for rest ! Peggy, bring here **THE BOOK**.
(They join in family-worship, and then retire.)

SCENE II.

The Farm-House. (Evening.)

GUDEMAN, GUDEWIFE, GRANDFATHER, PEGGY.

Grand. Poor Peggy ! Still the gloom is on your
 brow !

I'm grieved to see you.

Gudew. Silly thing ! such sighs !

You'd make one trow that you were really ill.

Peg. No, mother, I am neither well nor ill ;
 But in a middling way.

Gudem. The very worst
 Of all conditions ; for one cannot tell
 What to make of it !

Peg. Never mind me, father ;
 I'll shortly mend or end.

Grand. Hope for the best !
 Our fears are our worst ailments. I could guess
 The secret of your sadness,—

Peg. I'm not sad—
 Only not merry.

Gudem. Pray what would you do

If you were sad? To sit in silent dumps,
 And scarcely speak when spoken to ;—to wear
 A brow like grave November ;—long-drawn sighs,
 Like the wind moaning in the window-chinks,
 To heave at each third breathing,—these are not
 Sure signs of sadness ! no ?

Peg. I'll sing a song

If that will please you, father.

Gudem. If it please

Your wayward self, it may please me.

Gudew. Fy, fy !

You're too harsh with the lassie. Peggy, dear !

Just sing or not as your own heart inclines.

Peg. Oh ! yes I'll sing ! yet I'm not sure my song
 Will please you, grandfather.

Grand. It cannot fail,

If it please you, dear lassie.

PEGGY SINGS.

Oh ! lang shall Caledonia rue

That day, when on Culloden plain

The blood o' her bravest heroes stream'd

Like the torrent-gush o' wintry rain !

When the cruel victor joy'd to hear

The tartan'd warrior's dying groan ;

And his pitiless eye grew red and keen

As he cheer'd the murdering blood-hounds on.

Then Scotia's targe sank frae her arm,—

Her good braidsword was broke in twa ;

The tapmost flowers o' her thistle droop'd,

And the last o' the Stuarts was driven awa' ;

And ride ye north, or ride ye south,
 For a lee-lang day nought wad ye see,
 But the ruin'd wa's, a' bloody-stain'd,
 Where the hames o' the luckless brave should be.

Now she maun sit like a widow'd dame,
 In lonely wastes wi' slaughter red ;
 Nae crown to grace her joyless brow,
 Her freedom lost, her glory fled !
 The howlet screams in the empty ha',
 An' flaps his wing o'er the chair o' her kings,—
 In courts that rang wi' the warrior's tread,
 The lang grass waves, an' the nettle springs.

Sair, sair aboon the bloody graves,
 Wi' a heavy heart she makes her mane,
 Where lie her best an' bravest sons
 Who for her bled, an' bled in vain.
 An' aye when she lifts her wae-bent head,
 Out-owre the wide and the weltering sea
 She takes a lang an' a wistfu' gaze ;
 But the sails o' her Charlie nae mair glad her ee.

But the day may come when her bright ee-glance
 Shall kindle again as it did of yore,
 When Wallace wight led her warriors on,
 An' the Bruce her bloody lion bore :
 Her spreading thistle bauld an' free
 Its armed head may uplift again,
 An' the race o' her Stuarts wear the crown,
 And yet in their fathers' ha' may reign !

Grand. 'Tis a dark picture, Peggy, and I fear
 Too true a likeness. For the hopes it breathes
 They'll never be fulfill'd ; the Bard will prove
 A dreamer, not a Prophet. Let him dream !

'Twere the mere wantonness of cruelty,
To blame or punish that most air-born solace.

Peg. Thank you for him and for myself! I'm glad
To hear you pity these misguided men.

Grand. They're human beings, Peggy: who would
not

Pity their most unheard-of sufferings?

Gudem. I could have fought—did fight, against
them; now

I could fight for them! Cumberland insults
The sacred heart of whole humanity,
By his cold-blooded butcherings. A Prince!
The Son! the Brother of a King! to stain
His hands in the warm gore of prisoners,—
Of unoffending and defenceless women,—
Nay, even of veriest infants! Latest times
Will blush to utter the detested name
Of that most barbarous ruffian, Britain's shame!

Peg. Hark! some one's at the door.

Gudem. Come in! come in!
The door is on the latch.

Enter LEWIS.

Lew. I come to trust
You with a life of little value now:
The death-snares thicken all around my path;
And, like the hunted deer, I seek the spot
Where I have tasted peace in other days—
Betray me, or protect me, as you list.

Gudem. Betray!
Name not the word, brave Lewis! I would risk
My own life to protect thee.

Gudew. Welcome here,
Our kind protector !

Grand. Heaven be praised that thou
Hast 'scaped the perils of the battle-field
And murderous pursuit !

Gudem. Here may you rest
Beneath my roof in safety.

Lew. Generous man !
How shall I e'er requite—

Gudem. Speak not of that !
Can we forget the deep debt that we owe
To our kind protector ? Peggy, will ye stir !
And place the arm-chair by the fire, and get
Something to eat and drink !—Why sit you there
Pale, silent, like a bloodless, lifeless image ?
Bestir yourself !

[*She starts up, makes a half step towards LEWIS ;
then hastens to obey her father's directions.*]

Lew. Have you forgot me, Peggy ?

Peg. Forgot you ? Lewis !—Oh ! how worn you
look

With toil and sufferings !

Lew. Yes, I have been
Familiar with all grim and ghastly scenes
Of unimaginable, nameless horror,
Since last I saw thee ! But, my generous friend,
Is it quite safe for you to shelter me ?
Will it be dangerous to yourself ?

Gudem. Oh, no !
We Nithsdale men are deem'd the very pinks
Of unstain'd loyalty. Our gallant deed

At Lockerby, and the revenge you took
 On your return ; together with the name
 We bear of being stanch kirk-going men,
 Or hill-men, as some call us sneeringly,
 Make us quite unsuspected.

Lew. Make no boast
 Of your poor plundering exploit : You might
 Have paid it dearly.

Gudem. Dear enough we paid,
 And some of us might have paid dearer far
 Had we not met kind friends for dreaded foes—
 But these are delicate points. My gallant friend !
 I see, if chafed, you yet could wield a broadsword !
 I shall not put you to the proof. Once more,
 Let me assure your perfect safety here
 For weeks, months, years,—a lifetime, if you choose !
 And let me now conduct you where you may
 Enjoy the rest you so much need.

Lew. My thanks
 Fain would I speak, but cannot ! May the peace
 And bliss of Heaven be ever the reward
 Of such true-hearted friendship !

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

*A secluded spot near the Nith. (Twilight, in early
 Summer.)*

LEWIS. PEGGY.

Lew. My Peggy, must I leave thee ? Must my feet

Pace in deep loneliness my native hills,
 Now tenantless,—with bosom lone as they ;
 Its dear possessor distant far ? Oh ! come !
 Come with me, dearest, Peggy !

Peg. If you love
 As warmly as you say, why not remain
 And make this land your home ?

Lew. That may not be !
 My native element, my very life,
 Is action ; and my poor paternal hills
 Oppress'd and pillaged, mournfully demand
 Their every son's most fervent energies ;
 Nor may I turn a deaf ear to the voice
 That calls me, from amid the mountain mists.
 But come with me, and thou shalt reign the queen]
 Of purple heath, and foaming cataract,
 And sheeted lake, as far as one good sword
 May win them for thee. Come, thou dearest maid !
 And share with me true life, and liberty.

Peg. How dare you venture back ? Is there not still
 Much cause for dread ?

Lew. No, dearest ! there has been
 Issued of late a tardy, but a full
 Pardon, to all who fought for Charles Stuart ;
 And I am free to roam the Highland hills ;
 Or seek some silent glen, and build me there
 A bower for my own Peggy. Come, my love !
 Oh ! do not say me nay.

Peg. Lewis, I come !
 I can no longer say thee nay.

Lew. Bless'd words !

My own dear maid ! Let me thy soft consent
 Seal with one faithful kiss. Now let us go
 And bid farewell to your kind parents ; then
 Hie to the land of glen and mountain.

Peg. Stay ! —

My heart is wild and feverish,—let me think
 What I have done !—I will not shrink ! I'll go
 With thee, my Lewis, to the loneliest glen
 Traversed by mountain-stream ! yet let me pause.

Lew. What mean you, my dear love ?

Peg. Ye gentle hills !

Belted or crown'd with lightly-waving woods ;—
 Ye fields ! where peace and plenty smile, glad scenes
 Of rural toil and rural mirth ;—ye streams !
 Winding and singing on your quiet paths,
 Margin'd with velvet moss, and flowerets bright,
 Where I have play'd whole summer days, and pluck'd,
 Nay, fed on violets and primroses ;—
 Ye lawns and groves ! that skirt the fair abodes
 Of rank and affluence, ye too have been mine,
 Oft as your beauties fill'd my glowing breast
 With almost tearful raptures ;—Nith, sweet Nith !
 My own pure river, rolling in thy proud
 And burnish'd beauty, through a lovelier vale
 Than ever fabling poet dreamt or sung ;—
 Ye dear scenes of my earliest infancy !
 Where with light foot and lighter heart I've stray'd
 From dawn till dusk, and never thought it long ;
 Where I have hoped and fear'd, and grieved and
 joy'd ;

In a valley remote, by a bright runnel's side,
Root its gentle attachments, and live its calm hour.

Oh ! still might I stray where my young feet have stray'd,
By streamlet, by rock, and by ivy-bound tree ;
And list the spring-gale breathing soft thro' the glade,
And the clear loosening gush of the wood-music free !
With the dead and the distant there yet I could meet,
For 'tis haunted and hallowed ground where I tread,—
And the thrill of the heart-chords may tell, Oh ! how sweet
Is the vision'd recall of the days that have fled !

Ye dearly-loved scenes where my childhood up-grew !
Where I first learn'd to love, and to hope, and to fear,—
To muse amid nature's dread pomp, till I knew
In the depth of my soul that my home was not here !
Must I bid you a long and a latest farewell !—
In the haunts of my youth must I wander no more !—
Still in memory's innermost shrine shall ye dwell
Till life and its feverish dreams shall be o'er !

Now to my dear, dear parents let us go,—
Spend my last night in the sweet home of youth,—
Conclude my farewells !—and then haste away
To our far Highland home !

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

A wild Glen in the Highlands—A Castle in the distance—Huts at hand.

LEWIS. PEGGY.

Peg. Dear Lewis ! let us rest a while : my limbs—
My weary, weary limbs, cannot support
My sinking frame much farther.

Lew. No, not yet !—
We cannot yet stop ! many a rugged heath
And misty mountain, and dark rocky glen
We have to pass before we reach our home.

Peg. Then shall I never reach it ! here, even here
I could be well content to lay me down,
And end my toil by dying !

Lew. Do you not
Now bitterly regret that e'er you left
The groves, the green fields, and the flowery holms
Of lovely Nithsdale ?

Peg. Lewis, no ! these hills
Are wild and lofty, deep and dark the glens,
And the whole face of nature bears to me
A strange and savage aspect : yet whilst thou
Art true and kind, my Lewis ! where thou art
Is to me better than a paradise
And thou not there ! Let us go on ! I feel
Somewhat refresh'd,

Lew. Dost thou behold, my love !
That stately castle ?

Peg. Yes ; but what of it ?—
It has an air of almost royal pride
And grandeur, and its lady bears, no doubt,
Her high brow like a queen ;—but I could be
More happy in a little lowly hut,—
Like one of these,—with thee, my own dear Lewis !

Lew. Alas ! my love ! I cannot call my own
Even so poor a hut as one of these !
My home is now a ruin-pile, and I
Am but an outcast wanderer ! No friend,
No home, no dwelling-place have I, save what
I with the wild beasts share, the cavern'd cliff !
I have no home, not even a lowly hut,
To take thee to !—I know thou hatest me now ?

Peg. Hate thee ? Dear Lewis ! with increasing love,
My fond heart, like a dove, would o'er thee brood,
And soothe thy sorrows, cheer thy manly heart,
My own dear love ! We'll seek some lonely glen,
There build a hut, and pass our happy days
Remote from all the world ; for we shall be
More to each other than even all the world.
Come on !—I'll chide thee, Lewis, if thou look'st
Sad for so slight a cause.

Lew. And wilt thou then
Share even an outlaw's cave with me ?

Peg. I will !—
And sing thee songs to cheer thy solitude ;
Or share thy hours of toil and danger, love !

Lew. And wilt thou not upbraid the selfish man,
Whose false, false tongue, and most ungenerous
heart

Have woo'd thee to the couch of misery ?

Peg. Oh ! little dost thou know of woman's heart,
If thou canst think so, Lewis ! Hast thou given
Thy life to me, and could I ask for more ?
Hast thou, crush'd by a load of many woes,
Sought for *my* love to cheer thee ? Is not this
The highest honour thou couldst render me,
As deeming the possession of my love
Able to conquer and expel all woes ?
And it shall ever be the joy, the bliss,
The glory of my life, to be to thee
A ministrant of peace and happiness !

Lew. Oh ! matchless love and constancy ! Dear
maid !

Forgive me that I tried thee thus ! My tale
Of want and woe is all, thank Heaven, a fiction.
My clan was loyal to the king, though I,
Its chieftain's son, follow'd the hapless Prince ;
War scathed not them, and my peace has been made.
And now I hail thee to my father's hall,
Its Lady ! And behold, my gallant clan
Are mustering to receive, with honours due,
Their Chief and his fair Bride !

(*Highlanders are seen advancing, with music playing,
banners streaming, &c.*)

[*Exeunt.*]

III.

COWDENKNOWS.

How blythe, ilk morn, was I to see
My swain come o'er the hill ;
He skipt the burn, and flew to me,
I met him wi' good-will.
O the broom, the bonnie, bonnie broom,
The broom of Cowdenknows ;
I wish I were with my dear lad,
With his pipe and my ewes !

* * * * *

Hard fate ! that I should banish'd be,
Gang heavily, and mourn ;
Because I loo'd the kindest swain,
That ever yet was born !
O the broom, &c.

Old Song.

COWDENKNOWS.

SCENE I.

ANNIE, tending Sheep. (Spring.)

An. Sure'tis the hour when Colin used to come;
And yet he is not here! What can have chanced?
Has he forgot, or slighted me?—Oh, no!
Yonder he comes! I see him! hedge nor ditch
Impede his progress;—like a winged thing
He bounds across the burn. Be hush, my heart!
Thou fluttering fond betrayer! Let me keep
A due reserve, a fitting maiden-pride.

Enter COLIN.

Col. My sweet, my bonnie Annie! Oh, I've
thought,
The minutes hours, and every yard a mile,
Till I should meet thee! Hast thou waited long?

An. Waited for you! A very modest lad!
What right have you to think me such an idler?

Or such a thoughtless light-o'-love ?

Col. *Nay, Annie,*
I spoke but as I wish'd, and hop'd, and fear'd :
I would be happy did you come to meet me ;
But shamed and sorry had I made you wait.

An. Well, here I am at any rate ; but here
Long I'll not be : my ewes are wearing fast
Up the hill side, and I must after them.

Col. O never mind them : I'll send round my dog
To turn them back. Meanwhile sit down, my love !
I've got a song, a new one for you. Come !

An. Well, let me hear what idle thing you've got.

COLIN SINGS.

TUNE,—*Cowdenknows.*

The Highland bards may sing the Dee,
The Don, the rushing Tay ;
The royal Forth, the stately Clyde,
Are famed in many a lay :
Be mine to sing the bonnie, bonnie broom,
The broom o' Cowdenknows,
Where she, my ain dear lassie, strays,
Tending her lambs and ewes.

O Leader haughs are saft and green,
And Yarrow braes are fair ;
Not Leader haughs nor Yarrow braes
Wi' Cowdenknows compare.
O the broom, the bonnie, bonnie broom,
The broom o' Cowdenknows ;
Where my dear lass, the lee-lang day,
Tends a' her lambs and ewes.

Out-owre the knows the waving broom
 Flings free its golden tide ;
 Amang its sweet and silent bowers,
 My lassie, let us hide.
 O the broom, &c.

And for thy flock thou need'st na fear,
 Though thou shouldst gang wi' me ;
 Nae tod nor corbie shall them skaith,—
 I'll tend baith them and thee.
 O the broom, &c.

A' day thy ewes and lambs may feed
 Amang the braes sae green ;
 Be mine the care to keep them safe,
 And bught them in at e'en.
 O the broom, &c.

Then come, my ain sweet lassie, come,
 In safety feed thy ewes,
 And stray wi' me amang the broom
 Sae fair on Cowdenknows.
 O the broom, the bonnie, bonnie broom,
 The broom o' Cowdenknows ;
 Where my dear lass, the lee-lang day,
 Tends a' her lambs and ewes.

What say you, my sweet Annie, will you come ?

An. Hold there! Deep hid among the yellowbroom,
 Who shall protect me, Colin, from thyself?
 I doubt that would be giving to the fox
 The lambs to keep :—bad shepherd-craft, I ween.

Col. And dost thou ask who would be thy pro-
 tector ?

Col. My eloquent disputant ! Well may I
From thee learn lessons of sweet minstrelsy :
But sure thy Colin's faith, unsullied yet
By word or thought, should bear a greater weight
Than loose and general accusations.

An. Better

To trust too little than too much.

Col. Come, come ;

Look not so distant, dearest ! I could brook
The thickest, keenest snow-drift ever blew,
Wearing my sheep upon the brent hill-side
Where it smites chillest, rather than the cold
Unkindness of thy cheek and eye.

An. Oh ! flatterer !

A woman's frown, were it of hate and scorn,
Is mirth and sunshine to the angry blast
Of winter.

Col. Annie, no ! The winter blast
Beats on my bosom all without ; and I
Have learn'd to bear it ; but the other falls
Chill as a snow-wreath on my very heart.

An. Now tell me frankly, Colin, speak'st thou
truth ?

Or are these fine words meant for ornament ?

Col. Truth all—pure truth !—Or if a word or two
Do serve for show, why, tell me, bonnie lass,
Is the greensward upon the flowery braes
Less good, less useful to the feeding flocks,
Because the happy daisy opens there
Its bosom to the sun ?—because the primrose

Lifts there its pale and sickly head?—because
 The violet, sweet as my own shepherdess,
 Makes there her shy and silent mossy bower?

An. Ah! but green grass may hide, and flowers
 begem

The unsafe footing of a shelving bank,
 And tempt the witless nibblers to their ruin.

Col. And what advantage could it be to me
 Were I indeed to be so base a thing?
 All that my feet must daily trace, the hills,
 The glens, the streams, fair Cowden's broomy knows,
 The all that now my soul delights to see
 Would then become fearful memorials,
 To call up keen remorse; would haunt me still
 Like the pale ghosts of murder'd innocence,
 Till I should pine away, an outcast, bann'd,
 And conscience-stricken wretch.

An. And if I should
 Believe your words; what then?

Col. My Annie! then
 I should be happier than my tongue can tell.
 I never loved but thee—I never will:
 And I would wring the black drop from my heart,
 If there was one meant less than well to thee.

An. Dear Colin, I ne'er doubted thee.

Col. Why then
 Did you so torture my fond, faithful heart?

An. Because, like your own pipe, sweet music flows
 Free from your lip, when you are *touch'd* with skill!

Col. Thou sweet, provoking, arch one ! Dost thou
not

Tremble to think what punishment awaits thee ?

An. No, not a bit. I know I'm safe, quite safe,
In the protection of your moorland spell,—
All-powerful, all-pervading Love !

Col.

But yet

At least a score of kisses I must have
In barter for the pretty words I wasted.

An. Was it a deed of such desert to deck
In silvery words the pure and golden truth ?

Col. I cannot match thee in light raillery ;
But in the soundless depth of passionate love
My heart owns no superior.

An.

Very like ;

O'er head and ears, no doubt ?

Col.

Enough of this.

The cloud has pass'd away that lately hid
The sunshine of thy smile : Come to my arms,—
Rest on my happy heart, and hush its beating !

An. Nay, Colin, nay ; softly and fair holds long !
True love and joy are like high music-notes,
Too rapturously exquisite to last ;
And we, poor instruments of feeble clay,
Cannot endure such high-toned heavenly bliss !
Besides, my flock has worn clean out of sight,
Over the braes.

Col.

I'll turn them for thee, dearest !

Or tend them where thou wilt.

An.

I thank thee, Colin ;

And to thy care I'll leave them ; for to-day
 We hope my father will return, and I
 Must be at home to meet him. Let me go ;
 At milking-time again we'll meet.

Col. I'm loath
 To part so soon ; but if it must be so,
 I yield ; I would not for the world distress thee.
 Yet, since love's language ever flows in song,
 That I may tell my love, and that I may
 Have claims upon thee for a kiss or two
 By way of hire, canst thou, or wilt thou, still
 Wait a brief space, and hear another song ?

An. I'll venture ; so it be not all the longer.

COLIN SINGS.

The wintry winds hae blawn their last,
 Sleeps the gurlie Norlan blast ;
 Nae mair the snaw-drift, sleet, or rain,
 Sheet the hill or drown the plain ;
 Nae shepherd, 'mid the tempest's wrath,
 Toils to fend his flock frae skaith ;
 Heaven smiles on earth, wi' love-warm'd ee,
 And bonnie Annie smiles on me.

Up amang the sunny braes,
 Spouting springs their young heads raise ;
 The burnies wind out-owre the lea,
 Popple, poppling, fresh and free ;
 Now in glancing silvery sheen,
 Bedded now in gladsome green,
 Sweet they gush like Annie's ee,
 When melting, soft, she smiles on me.

The early lark, wi' dewy wings,
 Cleaves the clouds, and soaring sings ;
 Trills his lay at heaven's high gates,
 Where the blushing Dawn awaits.
 The mavis bids the glens rejoice,
 Loosening all his mellow voice ;
 I'll join the blithesome minstrelsy,
 For bonnie Annie smiles on me.

Col. My hire, sweet Annie ! now I claim my hire.

An. What ! for a song like that ? Why, Rant-
 ing Willie*

Would make a dozen such for half your hire.
 I'll owe it you till night.

Col. No, no ! I'll have
 Half payment at the least, just now ; and then
 The other half, and as much more for interest.

An. Hold, hold ! you lawless reaver ! you have ta'en
 More than the whole.

Col. Well, if I have, sweet lassie,
 I'll give you back as many as you choose.

An. We'll balance the account 'gainst bughting-
 time :

Meanwhile, good day t'ye, lad ; I must away.

Col. Farewell, my dearest Annie ! for a few
 Heavy and lonely hours ! I'll to the hills,
 And see that all our flocks be right and safe.

[*Exeunt.*]

* See the Notes to "*The Lay of the Last Minstrel.*"

SCENE II.

COLIN, *at the Ewe-bughts.*

Col. How slowly pass the hours! sure milking-time

Ought to have been ere now! I really think
That day gets tired, and moves more tardily
As night approaches. My sweet lovely lassie!
Oh! how I love her! how I long to meet her!

SINGS.

O sweet to my playful lambs
Is the sun on the flowery braes ;
And sweet to their feeding dams
Is the grass where the burnie strays ;
The honey-dew'd heather-bell
Is sweet to the eident bee ;
But sweeter than tongue can tell
Is bonnie Annie to me !

O dear is the dawning east,
To the wanderer lost on the wild ;
And dear to the young mother's breast,
Is her clinging, first-born child ;
Dear, dear to the banish'd man's soul,
The dreams of his ain countree ;
But dearer than a' dearest things
Is bonnie Annie to me !

I see her gliding o'er the flowery braes
 As fair, as lightly-moving as a swan
 Buoyantly floating o'er the sunny waves
 Of sweet St Mary's lake ! Yet stay ! how's this ?
 There's less of air and spirit in her motion
 Than wont to wing her gait. Her head droops too !
 I fear all is not well !—

Enter ANNIE.

My bonnie Annie,
 I've waited long and wearily.

An. For all
 Your fond regards, dear Colin ;—for the many
 Sweet proofs of kindness and of love ;—for all
 The hours of pleasure that your winsome tongue
 Has charm'd upon their way, accept the last,
 The sole return that this poor heart can give,—
 Its thanks of deepest gratitude.

Col. What means
 My dearest lassie ? These dark words of thine
 Strike on my very heart !

An. I jest not now.
 This is the last time, Colin, we shall ever
 Meet at the ewe-bughts ; this is the last time
 Ever my foot may press fair Cowdenknows ;
 This is the last time ever I may gaze
 On the wide-waving broom ; this is the last,
 The very last time ever I may hear
 Thy music-voice, my Colin !

Col. Why is this ?
 What unknown fearful doom disturbs thee ? Speak,
 And let me know the worst.

An. Then hear me, Colin :
 Thou knowest the deadly spirit of the feuds
 That long have raged between our rival names ;
 My father's heart is fill'd with that fierce hate.
 Some most officious tongue has told him all
 The story of our loves ; he question'd me,—
 I own'd the truth ;—he laugh'd in bitterness,—
 Then breathed a dreadful vow between his teeth.
 To-morrow I must leave these pleasant hills,
 These sweet green glens, and all my gentle flocks,
 And go with him ;—the town's dull, dingy lanes,
 And noisy bustling streets must be my home—
 My home !—Oh, no ! my prison ! Never more
 The dewy greensward, or the flowery heath,
 My foot may press ! The joyous song of birds,
 Pouring a thousand various notes of love,
 Shall glad my ravish'd ear, Oh ! never more !—
 Even sun, and sky, and winds, can never more
 Be what they were to me ! And thee—Oh ! hold
 My heart !—to thee, I've come to bid a long,—
 A last farewell !

Col. No ! never dream it, Annie !
 I'll to thy father—hard his heart must be,
 If true love's strong entreaties cannot move it.

An. 'Twill but incense him ; go not ; 'tis in vain.

Col. Let me at least make trial.

An. If you love me,
Grant me this one request,—go not!

Col. Why so?
I do not fear his anger, though he were
The bravest of his name; it has not been
My wont to be a trembler.

An. That it is
For which I fear. Colin, he is my father,
And thou—why need I mince it now?—my lover:
My soul fears for you both. Oh! do not go!

Col. I will not go, my Annie! Why should I
Grieve your true heart? But stay, my Annie, here,
And be my wedded wife, and tend the flocks
With me on Cowdenknows!

An. It may not be!

Col. Why may it not? Why should a father's
power
Be strain'd beyond its limits, but to make
His child for ever wretched? Nature's self
Resists, and Reason sanctions her resistance.

An. No!—
I may be most unhappy: o'er my mind
The sweet, sad memory of days gone by,
Of thee and my loved Cowdenknows, may come:
And I may sit alone, like prison'd bird,
Singing the lays of happier scenes and hours,
Their gay notes all to plaintive wailings changed:
Or, when my gather'd grief is all too full
For utterance, in silence weep;—but ne'er
Shall conscience, mingling its upbraidings keen,

Pollute the tears shed to the memory
 Of days and loves departed, with the drops
 Of dark remorse. Full bitter is my cup ;
 Let me not poison it with mine own hands !
 Colin ! my first, my last, my sole beloved !
 Our morning sun has sunk,—a winter blast
 Has blighted all our spring :—the sun of noon,
 The bloom of summer, we may never see !
 Once more a long—a last farewell !

Col.

Yet stay

One hour—a half—a few short minutes stay !
 I cannot, cannot thus part with thee, love !
 And must thou—wilt thou leave me ? Farewell then
 To all my fond, fond hopes ! I'll haunt the hills,
 The glens, the burns, the broom of Cowdenknows,
 The ghost of what I might have been ! Farewell !
 To hope, to love, to thee, a last farewell !

[*Exeunt.*

IV.

THE EWE-BUGHTS.

Will ye go to the ewe-bughts, Marion,
And wear in the sheep wi' me?
The sun shines sweet, my Marion,
But no half so sweet as thee.

Old Song.

Altho' thou maun never be mine,
Altho' even hope is denied,
'Tis sweeter for thee despairing
Than aught in the world beside.

Burns.

THE EWE-BUGHTS.

SCENE I.

(Evening, early in Summer.)

ALLAN, *bringing the Ewes to the Bughts.*

All. Hey, Keeper! haud away! hey, bring them
in!

Hey, lad! I fear we shall be late.—'Tis time
That we were at the bughts.—Oh, bughting-time,
'Tis worth, ay, three times worth the whole day long!
'Tis then I feel that life is sweet indeed;
Life near my Phemie! Oh! that little word,
That *my!* will it be ever realised?
Fool! trifling fool! how can I gain the race
If I ne'er make the start! There's Maxwell too,
I see he loves her; nay, I see he tries
By every little wile to steal her heart,
And win even ere he asks: while I stand still

Viewing another pluck the golden fruit
 That my soul dies in longing for! Why this
 Is worse than very madness! I *will* speak,
Will tell the soft, insinuating tale
 Of my pure love, and—but it may offend
 Her gentle, timid heart, and never more
 With the sweet smile of trusting innocence,
 Will she toy with me,—call me brother—friend;
 And share with me her little griefs and joys.
 How would my life taste then? No! better be
 Her bosom-friend than her discarded lover!
 But he may woo her, win her, and I lose
 At once hope, friendship, love, and all!—No! no!
 I must, I will reveal—She comes:—now hold,
 My heart, thy purpose! Give me winning words,
 For on this hour depends the glow or gloom
 Of my life's future day!

Enter PHEMIE.

All. Phemie, the Fair! Why, you are late to-
 night.

Ph. Well, I must ply the quicker, now I'm here.
 But am I late?

All. To me it seems you are:
 But I'm so glad to meet you, I would have
 You early here, and late ere you depart,
 The longer to enjoy your company.

Ph. Alone upon the moor from dawn till dusk,

It is not strange you long for bughting-time.
Me, too, its coming glads.

All. (Aside.) What does she say?
Heaven speed the omen!

Ph. I hear other strains
Than the wild, wheeling peewit's lonely cry:
See other creatures than the frisky lambs;
But, orphan as I am, when do I see
A friend, save at the Ewe-bughts?

All. Sure you speak
Sadly, my Phemie! And your looks are sad.
What grieves you? Do not, if you call me friend,
Deny me friendship's dearest office! Speak,
If you are grieved, and let me share your griefs,
And sharing, lighten them, as oft I've done.

Ph. Oh! thou art ever kind! Thou hast to me
Been Father, Mother, Brother, Sister, all!
And yet——

All. What yet? My Phemie! can there be
The shadow of a doubt, that I am still
Your Brother,—more than Brother?

Ph. Why, oh! why
Have I no Mother? in whose arms my heart
Might cradled lie,—might sigh its secret thoughts,
And find repose and shelter?

All. Dearest Phemie!
What moves you thus? If ever I have been
The sharer of your cares, and griefs, and joys,
And kept my trust, tell me your secret heart,
And think your Mother hears!

Ph. Allan, I must
Do, what perhaps no woman ever did,
And none should ever do. Yet think me not
Unfemininely bold: Fate urges me,
And I must—Look not on me, else I die
Ere I can breathe my secret!—Maxwell loves—
He woos—he offers wedlock—warmly pleads,
And begs an answer. Mother have I none
To counsel me!—

All. (*Aside.*) Great Heavens! and is it so?—
Oh, Love, and Hope, farewell!

Ph. Will you not speak?
Have you, too, left me? *You!* Have I no friend?
Oh! Allan, is this well?

All. (*Aside.*) What can I say?
Yet I must speak.—In this your heart must judge
Even for itself.—

Ph. Cold, cold, unkind! Is this
The sum of all your friendship? thus to leave
Me in my hour of need! O Thou, who art
The Father of the fatherless, from heaven
Guide, counsel me! No friend have I on earth!

All. (*Aside.*) This must not be! She weeps—Be-
shrew my heart,
My selfish heart! I must speak to her.—Phemie,
How can I counsel you? for love, they say
Takes no advice: and, if you love the lad,
There is no more to say.

Ph. Still, still so cold!

Were I what you have call'd me oft, your sister,
What, then, would you advise ?

All. Do you desire
In this my candid, true opinion ?

Ph. Yes.

All. Then, answer candidly : Phemie, could you
With him be happier than with any else ?

Ph. I know not that—you ask too much—Yet this
I may confess—with him I could be happy—
That is, I think I should—unless, indeed,
He have some grievous fault I know not of.

All. Once more. Grant me this night to think of it,
And when we meet here at to-morrow's dawn,
You shall have my opinion.

Ph. Dear, dear friend !
My lone heart thanks you ! Brother-friend, good
night ! [Exit.

All. Good night, dear Phemie !—
' Dear friend—Brother-friend !' And is this all ?
Oh ! perish the cold formal term ! No more ?
Not Lover ? No !—' With him I could be happy !'
' I think I should !' And shall *he* win her thus ?
Win her, and mock at the forsaken lover ?—
This night—this deep, dark night—if we should
meet—
Despair is strong and terrible !—'Twere easy
To crush a rival's life.

Oh ! gracious God !
Chase Thou the insidious Demon from my soul !
Oh ! save me from perdition !—

She loves him, yes, she loves him ! Could I then
 Wring, with red hands, her heart-strings ? Oh ! no,
 no !—

She calls me Brother ; she has given to me
 The guardianship of her fair maiden-fame,
 And her life's happiness : Oh ! let me be
 Generous as she is trusting ! What am I ?
 And what is he ? Conscience, adjust the beam !
 His merits are, a name unstain'd ; a heart
 Of manly worth and honour ; hands of frank
 And liberal charity ; a tongue that ne'er
 Broke truth, or hurt his neighbour ; wealth enough,
 More than enough, to meet his every want ;
 Lastly, a form, if not of matchless grace,
 Yet such as well may please a woman's eye :—
 To match them what have I ? What is my wealth ?
 What my own hands can win !—And shall I then
 Wed her to poverty, when she might live
 A life of ease and affluence ?—'Tis enough !
 His scale preponderates !—Never till this hour
 Long'd I for wealth ; but now, for lack of wealth,
 I bid farewell to Love, and Hope, and all
 That render life worth having. One by one,
 Mine own hand plucks the blossoms of bright hope,
 And scatters them to sun, and wind, and rain,
 To waste for ever ! Oh ! that it were *not*
 Sinful to burst the thread of life !—that thread
 Whose dreary bond connects into one mass
 The grim array of pain, affliction, woe,
 And sinks the soul immortal 'neath the weight

Of mortal miseries ! Must I then live
But to be wretched ? Can it be a crime
To cast away what I no motive have
For cherishing ? Yes, I *must* live—*must* fill
The station, and endure the sufferings,
Appointed me by fate—*must* linger on
Alone, and hopeless ! Shall I then behold
Her all another's ? Oh ! thou mighty arch
Of all-embracing heaven !—that I could now,
In my soul's bitter agony, rend down
Thy everlasting pillars, crush at once
The universe to ruins, and restore
The wild misrule of chaos !—
The last fierce pang is o'er ! I feel the gripe
Of fate upon my soul ! O Thou, who art
The Ever-Merciful ! support me now !
Guide me along bright virtue's onward path ;
Uphold my sinking feebleness ; direct
My every thought, word, action ; and be Thou
My life, my light, my hope, and my reward.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

The Ewe-Bughts. (Morning.)

ALLAN.

All. How tranquilly this little well-eye sleeps,
As if no storm e'er broke upon its rest,
No thunder-cloud e'er darken'd o'er its sheen,
Blackening and troubling its pellucid wave !
May not my heart yet sleep as still ? It may !
For when its hopes, its joys, its very fears,
Are smitten all to death, then may it sleep
As sleeps this fountain 'neath the winter-spell,
Untroubled, but cold, cold, and dead ! Even now
I feel the resolute calmness of despair ;
And I can smile at fate. Ye silent hills !
Ye wide brown moors ! communion let me hold
With you, and with the mighty Spirit-Voice
That lives, and breathes, and traverses amid
Your everlasting wilds !
Thou old grey cairn ! how willingly could I
Exchange my lot for his, who rests unknown
Within your rugged bosom !
But this is very weakness ! I have form'd
In solitude my purpose.—

Lo ! she comes !

My—no, not *my*—*his* Phemie comes ! Let me
Sweep from my brow, and eye, and cheek, each trace
Of my last sleepless night's deep misery,
And be once more her friend !

Enter PHEMIE.

So early up ?

'Tis yet but grey-light, and the morning mist
Sleeps like a silent sea upon the holms ;
You'll make a thrifty wife !

Ph. That's not quite sure :

A thrifty maiden oft becomes, they say,
A sluttish wife. But, Allan, are you well ?

All. Quite well ! Why do you ask ?

Ph. Because your brow

And eyes look heavy.

All. Oh ! mere marks of thought !

You left a subject yester-eve, you know,
For me to muse on.

Ph. Sure I did not think

'Twould like the nightmare weigh upon your breast,
Murdering your dreams.

All. Nor did it. Ere we dream,

First we must sleep.—To the point ! I have revolved
Deeply and anxiously, in every shape
And bearing, what you spoke of : and at length
Thus would I counsel you. Give him your hand,
Your heart ! make him the happiest of men,

And be blest with him ! Every thing is his
 In person, mind, and fortune, that can make
 A woman happy. Others there may be
 Could love as deeply, truly, fervently,
 But could not keep thee from the hungry clutch
 Of poverty ; yet rather would endure
 To lose thee than to see thee pine :—Enough
 For such to know that thou art happy now
 Beyond the reach of fate !

Ph. And would you thus
 Advise your sister ?

All. You I thus advise—
 And could a sister ever be so dear !
 But will you grant me one request ?

Ph. Name it !
 That I may say 'tis yours.

All. Nay, 'tis not much.
 When you are his, and happy—when your heart
 Rises in gratitude to Him who gives
 All precious blessings—duly even and morn,
 When knees are bent, and clasped hands are raised,
 And the rapt spirit's adoration swells
 Too large for human utterance,—then, Oh ! let
 One thought of me be mingled in your prayers !
 Farewell ! sweet Sister-friend ! farewell, farewell !

[*Exit.*

Ph. What can he mean ? Why gone so suddenly ?
 There's something strange in all this ! Let me think.
 What's here ?—a piece of paper !—written too—

He must have left it,—and perchance it may
Explain the mystery.

READS.

Farewell to hope ! to love farewell !
Farewell, alas ! for evermore,
Ye joys, that 'mid the heart-strings dwell !
Farewell ! your bright brief day is o'er.

Ye Phantom-hopes ! that smiling twine
Rose-chaplets for the ardent brow,
I've hail'd your glittering splendours mine,—
Farewell your vain delusions now !

The gripe of anguish wrings my heart,
Till blood at every pore it weeps ;
Its master-chords all thrilling start
With that strong pang which never sleeps.

A thousand fancies, hopes, and fears,
Those rainbows in youth's mellow sky,
From the dim sepulchre of years
Again awake, again to die !

Oh ! rarely has it been my lot
To bask my heart in rapture's ray ;
It glimmers o'er that lonely spot,
Then glances fast, and far away !

Then let me draw the deepest fold
Of dark oblivion o'er my breast ;
And all unnoted, silent, cold,
Perchance my weary heart may rest.

Yet, ere it sinks into its long,
Its final slumber, one warm prayer,
My sobbing breath, my faltering tongue,
For thee, for thee to Heaven would bear :

All the best bliss that can be given
To human kind, beneath the sky,
Be thine on earth—be thine in Heaven
Immortal bliss, eternal joy !

I dare not guess the meaning of these lines :
But well I feel, that to unriddle them
And his abrupt departure, were a task
Too easy. Generous spirit ! fare-thee-well !
The orphan's blessing on thee rest, and Heaven's.

[*Exit.*

V.

THE TOCHERED MAIDEN

OF

THE GLEN.

Tibby Fowler o' the glen,
There's owre mony wooing at her.
Old Song.

Since my uncle's dead I've lads enow,
That never before cam here to woo ;
But to the laddie I'll prove true,
That loved me first of onie, O.
Old Song.

THE TOCHERED MAIDEN

OF

THE GLEN.

SCENE I.

*The Farm-House in the Glen. Morning.
(Summer.)*

JESSIE. MENIE.

Jes. Heigh ho! this is a weary, weary world!
I'm sick and tired of wealth,—more sick and tired
Than e'er I was of poverty.

Men. You have
Much to complain of, doubtless! Tocher good
Left by our careful uncle—dresses fine
As any lady's—woosers even in droves—
What would you have, I wonder?

Jes. I would have
Less flattery and more love. We never are
Quite right, or quite contented. Tocher! dress!—
Can they give happiness? Woosers!—in sooth,

They are my worst tormentors ! fawning knaves !
 A short while since, when but a simple snood
 Bound back my hair, and to the bughts I bare
 The milking-pail at even, not one of them
 E'er look'd the way I went : but oh ! the change
 My uncle's gear has wrought ! Now I am grown
 So lovely—if all tales be true—no man
 Can gaze on my sweet face and keep his heart !
 Vain fools ! I know them, and I scorn their arts !
 But where is he, the artless shepherd-lad,
 Whose soft voice gently breathed the first love-tale
 That e'er stole on my ear, while my young heart,
 Trembling, yet pleased, flutter'd within my breast
 Like unfledged linnet ? Why does he remain
 So distant, now when every fear is gone
 That poverty could threaten ? Has he seen
 Some fairer maiden, and forgot his troth ?
 Or can he think that wealth could ever make
 Me haughty and inconstant ?

Men.

Well I ween,

Whate'er the matter be, it is not love
 For any other face—if looks may speak
 The language of the heart. No farther gone
 Than Sunday last I saw him at the kirk,
 And for one look he gave the minister,
 He cast a hundred side-long glances, fill'd
 With wistful love, on you.

Jes.

Did he indeed ?

My first, my faithful lover ! Would he but
 Speak out his mind, I'd let the proud ones see

I know the worth of true, respectful love,
 And can reward it! Oh! the cruel law
 That binds the tongue of woman! I could well
 Find in my heart to break its cold restraints!—
 Why should I not? If wealth must be to me
 The loss of happiness, 'twere better far
 That I were yet a simple shepherdess,
 Bless'd with my shepherd's fond and faithful love!

JESSIE SINGS. (Air—*The Yellow-hair'd Laddie.*)

Weel mind I the day, when the first time I saw
 My Yellow-hair'd Laddie, the flower o' them a',
 When he came to the hill for sax score o' young lambs,
 And I help'd him to wear them awa frae their dams.

Sae saftly he spak, an' sae sweet was his smile,
 On the daisied burn-brae as we rested a while;
 How happy, I thought, with a sigh, could I be
 If the Yellow-hair'd Laddie were bridegroom to me!

Though rarely sinsyne have we met on the hill,
 I think an' I dream o' my dear laddie still;
 My wish it was ne'er for braws, riches, nor lan',
 But the Yellow-hair'd Laddie to be my gudeman.

Though now like a lady fu' braw I can gang,
 An' coofs wi' toom purses come wooing fu' thrang,
 They grien for my tocher—they care nought for me;
 But the Yellow-hair'd Laddie my bridegroom shall be.

They sigh, an' they whisper, an' ca' me fine names,
 They speak me fine speeches 'bout loves, darts, and flames;—
 Far dearer ae blink o' my laddie's blue ee,
 Oh! the Yellow-hair'd Laddie my bridegroom shall be!

Poor chiel ! he's sae blate, no ae word can he say,—
 But I love him the mair ;—I'll e'en meet him half-way ;
 I'll gie him my tocher, my heart, and my han',
 An' the Yellow-hair'd Laddie shall be my gudeman !

Men. A wise intention, sister ! But, meanwhile
 I see the young laird, on his prancing nag,
 Come dashing up the loaning. How d'ye mean
 To entertain the feather-headed youth ?

Jes. To send him back more fool than he came
 here,

If that be possible ! Dear Menie, set
 Your wits to work, and help me with some trick
 May cause him rue the day that e'er he came
 To woo for tocher !

Men. I will gladly try—
 'Twould be rare sport !—But soft ! he's lighting
 down—

See how he struts ! proud as a very peacock !
 We'll make him stoop his crest !—But I must off,
 And think on something. [Exit MENIE.

Jes. Here he comes, vain fool !

Enter YOUNG LAIRD.

Young L. How does my lovely Maiden of the
 Glen—
 My sweetest lassie ?

Jes. Whom, sir, do you mean ?

Young L. Whom but yourself, fair Jessie? Seven
long miles
I've spurr'd my gallant brown through moss and
muir,—

My matchless brown!—not such another steed
Is to be found in all broad Galloway!
Hot-foot, I'll match him, twenty miles, against
The Stewartry, from the braes of wild Glenapp,
To the green vale of Nith! I hope to see
Him win the broose yet, on the bridal day
Of some one I could name!

Jes. Laird, do you wish
To sell your horse?

Young L. Sell him? my dashing brown!
I would not part with him for aught on earth!

Jes. I thought—but 'tis no matter—Well?

Young L. Speak out
Your thought, sweet Jessie! I, too, think sometimes.

Jes. Of what?

Young L. Of you, my dearest.

Jes. And your horse?

Young L. Of him? Ay, always. Shall I tell you
how,

The other day, Glendinning and myself—
Oh, he's a noble animal! Do come
And look at him—I'll tell you how I beat
Glendinning out and out.

Jes. Pray tell me here;
'Twill do as well.

Young L. But you should see him while

I tell of his exploits. Well, let that pass.
 Old Alexander with his hounds were out ;
 Glendinning and——

Enter MENIE.

Men. O Laird ! for mercy's sake !
 Your horrid horse ! he'll kill them every one !

Young L. Kill what ?

Men. The goslings, Laird ! his bridle's slipp'd—
 See where he's now !

(He runs out—catches the horse beside the pond—mounts him ; the gander comes hissing—the horse shys—the saddle slips round, and the LAIRD falls into the pond. JESSIE, MENIE, and the Servants laughing, as he gets up and runs off after his horse.)

Jes. Ha ! ha ! the “ gallant brown ! ”
 Is that the way you beat Glendinning, Laird ?
 Well speed ye, Laird.

Men. The gander, Laird ! run, run !

Jes. So much for him. He'll be in no haste back
 To woo me with the praises of his horse.

Men. Have not I managed well ?

Jes. Dear sister, yes !
 But tell me how you did it.

Men. From the ring
 I slipp'd the bridle, led him to the pond,
 Slacken'd the saddle-gear, came running home,

Gave the alarm, and sent the fool to show,
As well I knew he would, his horsemanship;
And how he sped, he'll not forget, I ween,
He, and his gallant brown!

Jes. Even let him go
And muse on his mishap. His father's wealth,
Already deeply pledged, he thought to mend
His unthrift with my tocher. Witless gowk,
He go a-wooing! Send him to the fair
To gossip with horse-jockeys.

Men. Hold you there!
Put on a sober face, for yonder comes
Our learned Dominie.

Jes. What, Samuel Gray?
The smooth-tongued flatterer! What brings him
here?

Men. Your long purse, sister, doubtless. Shall
we throw
Some witchery o'er him?

Jes. No. I scorn the man,
Yet I revere his calling. He shall meet
With no uncivil usage here, unless
Himself provoke it. Leave me for a while;
I'll try what words can do.

Men. If you should need
Assistance, let me know. I long to learn
If there is metal in him.

Jes. Fie!—Away!
I hear his step. [Exit MENIE.

Enter SAMUEL GRAY.

Sam. G. Fair Maiden of the Glen,
Sweet be the sunshine on your lovely brow!
And may the happy hours glide o'er your head
On angel-pinions. Happy is the man
Whose eyes behold thee in thy virgin bloom,
Beautiful as the Queen of Smiles and Loves
When from the deep emerging, borne along
The hoary paths of ocean by a train
Of sea-nymphs, as old poets sweetly sung:
But, oh! how happier he, to whom kind Fate
May give the empire of those radiant charms!

Jes. Sir? Mister Gray, I cannot understand
Such learned speeches. Pray, subdue your words
To such plain meaning as a country lass
May comprehend: else must you teach me,—tho'
I fear I'd be a dull, untoward scholar.

Sam. G. To teach thee, lady, were a task too
good
For even Dionysius, though his hand
Once sway'd a sceptre! Yet, oh! might I teach
Your gentle heart the lessons of young Love!—

Jes. What lessons, Mister Gray?

Sam. G. Might I presume—
Dear lady, love unites—there is a chord
That sends its thrilling notes—when sympathy
Attracts congenial natures—sighs and looks,

For words want power—the heart—the heart—
 permit

My lips to seal—

Jes. Stay, stay! This broken speech—
 This ill-repeated lesson, Mister Gray—
 I could perhaps interpret: but you must
 Answer a few brief questions first. Say, then,
 Does it befit a man, whose life has been
 Devoted solemnly to teach the ways
 Of virtue, honour, and religion, thus
 To come prepared with flattery's witching words
 Against a simple maiden? Is it right,
 Or generous, to assume, with wily art,
 The semblance of true, honourable love,
 When well I know there glows no purer flame
 Within your breast than the base love of gold?
 Shame on you, sir! Has learning done no more
 Than store your head, and smooth your tongue?

While all

The better feelings of your heart lie waste,
 The worse spring up in rank luxuriance.
 A simple maid, skill'd in no higher lore
 Than what her Bible teaches, gives you this
 Lesson of Christian morality!—
 Not less in value, as she humbly thinks,
 Than your fine heathen tales of nymphs and loves.

Sam. G. Forgive me, lady, and believe me now!
 Your pure, untutor'd heart has given me
 A just rebuke; has chasten'd and expell'd
 The demon, Vanity, from its stronghold

In my repentant bosom. From this hour
 My task shall be to elevate my soul
 To loftier aims ; to cherish in my breast
 All pure and self-denying principles ;
 To place before my mind expanded views
 Of my important duties ; and perchance
 Thus your esteem I yet may gain—I ask
 No dearer meed—I know my ill-desert.
 Farewell, pure-hearted Maiden—hence I go
 A humbler, and, I trust, a better man.

Jes. Farewell.—Maintain your purpose, and believe

You have already won my high esteem.

[*Exit* SAMUEL GRAY.]

I did him, then, no more than justice : Well,
 I'm glad he's done. I can respect,—nay, more,
 Can honour him,—but love ?—My shepherd lad,
 No love have I for any one but thee.

Enter MENIE.

Men. Upon my word, this Dominie of ours
 Has, after all, a heart ! I heard his words,
 And watch'd him as he went ; his steps were slow,
 And pensive were his looks. He turn'd and raised
 His eyes to heaven—mutter'd some prayer, or vow,
 Then sprung across the stile, and disappear'd.
 He was well worth a thousand of the Laird !

Jes. Have his fine words won your heart, Menie ?

Men.

No.

But his frank owning of his fault ; and more,
His purpose of amendment, well deserve
More praise than I have given.

Jes.

If he should

Become all that he seems to wish ; and then
Should gain your favour, sister, you shall find
That I can honour worth, and act the part
Of a kind sister too. But I must go
And give some orders to the shepherds.—Look !
Lo, yonder comes another ;—yet he seems
Unlike a wooer—sure it cannot be—
Yes, 'tis old Simon Gatherall ! Oh ! do,
Dear Menie, pass for me ! I'm very sure
He'll never find you out !

Men.

That will I, Jess,

Most readily ! 'Twill be such sport ! Away,
And leave me to enjoy the honey'd words
Of my rare ancient lover.

[*Exit. Jessie.*

Now shall I

Tease this old fool to purpose ! They deserve
No less, these hoary wooers ! 'T sets them well
To long for blooming twenty-two, while they
Creep hirpling o'er a staff, ripe for the grave,
Instead of blythesome marriage.

Enter SIMON GATHERALL.

Sim. G. My bonnie lady ! how d'ye do this day ?

I need not ask ; ye bloom as fresh and fair
As a May lily.

Men. Thank you, thank you, sir !
I hope I see you well, in spite of age
And its attendant frailties !

Sim. G. Frailty ? Age ?
I'm not so old and frail, my bonnie dow !
A man's but at his best at forty-five.

Men. [*Aside.*
(That, and a score, were near the truth!) Excuse
My witless words ! Misled by country talk
I thought you old, but find I'm wrong.

Sim. G. Dear lassie,
Never believe the country's clash ! Because
I am a prudent man, and never join
Their idle racketings and waste, forsooth,
They call me old and miserly !—Ne'er mind ;
I'm young enough to think of marriage yet.
And should some bonnie lassie give her hand,
She'd maybe find her home as snug and blythe
As any in three parishes.

Men. Indeed,
To say the truth, I've often thought our lads
Too fond of mirth and revelry abroad
To make good husbands.

Sim. G. Never in your life
Spoke you a truer word ! Vain butterflies,
They do not know the worth of home !

Men. Besides,
They are such spendthrifts ! ten to one they bring

Their poor misguided wives and families
To utter ruin.

Sim. G. That's my very thought !
Waste not, and want not ! Oh ! the dear delight
Of adding pence to pounds, and pounds to pence !
That, and a careful wife—

Men. How can a man
Pretend to love his wife, and all the while
Lavish in wasteful folly every means
Of making her, his children, and himself,
Happy and comfortable ?

Sim. G. Dearest lassie,
You speak my very sentiments ! How blest
Were I with such a wife ! What think'st thou, dear ?
We'd be the happiest couple—

Men. Oh ! fie ! sir,
You make me blush !

Sim. G. My bonnie budding rose !
I like thy blushes ! Do not say me nay !
Sweetly consent, and—

Men. But I am so young—
So fond of girlish play—you could not bear
My silly mirthfulness.

Sim. G. Trust me for that !
I like a little harmless fun myself
Upon a time.

Men. Oh, rare ! You would not frown
If I should sing to while away an hour
In the long winter evenings ?

Sim. G. Frown ! I'd rather
Sing with you, lassie !

Men. Better yet ! Come, now,
Let's try how it will do !—

SINGS.

I'll sing my ain gudeman a sang when he comes hame,
A braw canty sang at e'en when he comes hame,
I'll beat the cozy ingle till it gi'es a cheerfu' flame,
An' I'll sing a canty sang to him when he comes hame.

We'll hae nae idle junketings in our douce hame,
Nae waste and nae want in our ain douce hame,
Ne'er riot till in poverty our folly sair we blame,
But sober happiness shall dwell in our douce hame.

Come join the chorus !

Both. But sober happiness shall dwell in our snug hame.

We'll hae nae costly ornaments in our snug hame,
Nae gay tinsel finery in our snug hame,
We'll hae what's good an' usefu', we'll hae nought for show
or name,

Both. An' sing the sang o' sweet content in our snug hame.

Sim. G. My dearest, sweetest, wisest, bonnie
lassie !

Give me your hand, and let me call you mine !
We're made for one another ! Let me taste
The honey of your lips !

Men. Oh ! no, no, no !
You terrify me ! you're in such a haste !
Old ? Why, you are too young ! But shall we dance ?
Do you like dancing ?

Sim. G. Oh yes! we may dance
When we've nought else to do.

Men. Come let us try,
You sing so well, I'm certain you can dance.
Come, come!

Sim. G. Tut, lassie! not just now!

Men. Yes, come!
You must! I will not be refused!—Come, come!—

Sim. G. Daft lassie!—

Men. Come, give me your hand!

(Sings and dances round him.)

Merrily, cheerily, brisk and airily,
Hey, auld man, away, auld man,
Fairly, cannily, lightly, funnily,
Strike up the dance sae gay, auld man!
Lilt up the measure wi' blythesome glee,—
Gar the auld wig to the rafters flee,
And nimbly trip it alang wi' me,
Come, brisk auld man, away, auld man!

*(Tosses away his wig, and while she is whirl-
ing him about the room, enter JESSIE.)*

Jes. What, what! Old Simon! Menie! What
means this?

Men. Not much. My venerable lover here
And I, were practising a little;—just
By way of trial how the thing would do,
Should we get married.

Jes. Married! Sure you jest?
Married to that old man!

Men. Why not? he wants a wife,
And I want money.

Sim. G. Have I been deceived?
Are you not, then, the Lady o' the Glen?

Men. Her younger sister. Never mind! I'll be
A frugal wife. O! you will be most blest
In getting me!

Sim. G. You, you! No, I'll have none
Of your fine younger sisters!—tocherless,
And good for nothing, but with witching words
To wile a plain man to his ruin! No!
I'm bless'd that I escaped the snare!

Jes. A frank confession! So you come to woo
Me for my wealth? And, like a weak old fool,
Degraded your grey head to be the sport
And plaything of a giddy girl! For shame!
To see an old man fallen into a state
Of second childhood, is most pitiful:
But when we see the mean and selfish tricks
Of an old doting miser, we can feel
Nothing but utter loathing and contempt!
Away! and let me never see thee more!

[*He sneaks off.*]

Men. What thought you of my sport?

Jes. I must declare
I cannot quite approve it:—though the fool
Deserved it all, I cannot bear to see
Old age made so ridiculous.

Men. Do not be
So grave ;—'twas all for your sake ; and besides,
'Twas such a tempting opportunity !
I thought I should have died with very laughter
When he began to sing and dance !

Jes. Well, well !
At any rate he's gone : And I have set
Another scheme agoing. What may be
The consequence I cannot yet foresee.
I hope—yet there is some good ground for fear—
I must about it—no time's to be lost !

Men. Can I not help you, sister ?

Jes. No ; not now.
This matter I must manage for myself.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

*The banks of the Burn—ROBIN, JESSIE in disguise
as a Shepherd boy, driving a small flock of lambs.*

Rob. I think I'll turn again. You and your dog
May now with ease conduct my pretty lambs
To their new home :—though they had been as well
Under my care, on their own native hills,
And with their dams yet for a week or two.

Jes. Our mistress has some notions of her own
On that, as on most subjects.

Rob. Like enough;
And who can blame her?

Jes. I shall not for one.
But I must thank you for your help so far,
And try the rest myself.

Rob. What's all the haste?
'Tis long till dark! Come, rest you here a while,—
You and your little flock. Come, sit you down
On this green mossy brae, where primroses,
Gowans, and violets, lift their lovely heads,
To welcome spring-tide's gentle sun and shower.
I love this flowery brae; and well I may!
On such a day as this—the summer skies
Smiling most placidly; the wimpled burn
With all its fairy waterfalls and pools
Sparkling as now; the rough sloe sheeted o'er
With its bright snowy blossoms; wild flowers young,
Peeping from out the fresh green sward, as now,—
On such a day, and in this very scene,
Lovely as now, this heart of mine first thrill'd
With the sweet trembling bliss of youthful love—
First love!—pure as the new-fallen snow!—But
sure

I'm talking to myself! Sit down, my lad;
And tell me how you like this country-side;—
For I think you're a stranger.

Jes. I have been
But short while shepherd to that lucky lass
They call the Tochered Maiden of the Glen.

Rob. And how like you her service?

Jes. Well enough,
For the short time I've known it.

Rob. Can you tell
If half the tales that through the country ring,
About her wooers, be aught like the truth ?

Jes. I know not half the country's tales ; but this
Full well I know,—there passes scarce a day
But there come dozens, clad in all their best,
Eager to win her love.

Rob. And how does she
Receive the selfish crew ?

Jes. Oh ! there's no doubt
As other women would : Her vanity
Must be so highly gratified with all
Their flatteries, that she, no doubt, believes
Herself the very pink of excellence—
A perfect goddess !—

Rob. Oh, how changed !—but no,
I'm sure she never—that is, I have heard,
That ere her uncle's death, she was a lass
Of sense and modesty ; and I should hope
She'll not now turn a vain coquette.

Jes. I doubt
She's not much less already.

Rob. Do you hear
Who are supposed her favourites ?

Jes. I have heard
So many spoken of—

Rob. Can you name some ?

Jes. There's the Young Laird, 'tis thought he has
a chance :—

He bears a high head,—rides a dashing horse,—
And has enough of impudence.

Rob. I'm sure

She'll never fancy him, conceited fool !

Jes. There's Samuel Gray, the schoolmaster. I
hear

He's well received.

Rob. I dread him more, far more—

He has both head and heart ; and his learn'd tongue
Can frame bewitching tales,—yet sure his airs
Of affectation cannot please the taste
Of a plain country girl. Who is next ?

Jes. There's Simon Gatherall, Ned Smart, Dick
Quill,

O, a whole legion !—

Rob. There is little fear

That she will cast away her love on such
A motley squad.

Jes. Fear ! What is there to fear ?

Sure you or I have little cause to fear
Which of her lovers she may choose to make
Her lawful lord and husband ?

Rob. Every man

Should wish well to all women. Let us, then,
Wish that the lover of her choice may be
A man of worth and honour ; not a wretch
Of sordid, selfish nature, whose sole aim
Is to obtain her wealth.

Jes. I've heard besides,
Some story of a shepherd lad, who was
Her lover years ago, ere she became
An heiress.

Rob. What of him?—

Jes. They say he had
Won her affection, and then slighted her,
Before her uncle's death; and, now, for shame
Of his false conduct, comes not near, though she
Would rather have him in his shepherd's plaid
Than even the brawest, proudest, of her wooers.

Rob. If it should be so—no, it cannot be!

Jes. What cannot be?

Rob. Why do they say that he
Woo'd and then slighted her?

Jes. Because he was
A most inconstant lad; he never knew
His own mind for a week together; changed
From love to coldness, like an April day;—
A faithless promise-breaker.

Rob. 'Tis quite false!—
When did I ever break my plighted troth
Of love or friendship?

Jes. You! Are you the lad?
Ha! ha!—This is the best joke in my life
I've had the luck to meet with.—Ha! ha! ha!
Are you the faithless swain?

Rob. —But let me hint
That it may be a serious joke for you,
Should it be push'd too far. I *am* the man.

I loved her dearer than my tongue can tell;—
 As witness this burn-brae, where first I spake
 To her of love : my heart even now is hers,—
 Unalter'd, and unalterably hers,—
 In all the truth and fervour of first love !
 But she now moves in a more lofty rank ;
 And though I cannot cease to love, I shall,
 Whate'er it cost me, check each longing wish—
 Each self-born hope that she were mine.

Jes. Poor lad !

I must not call thee “ faithless swain,” alack !
 But “ faithful and forsaken.”

Rob. Thou had'st best
 Restrain thy feeble mockery, silly boy.
 Unworthy of my anger as thou art,
 Speak one more taunting word of her, I'll send
 Thee, like a whipp'd child, whining home !

Jes. That were,
 To her a gallant compliment, forsooth !
 T'would work a reconcilment !

Rob. Take thy meed !
 Provoking imp :—

*(Attempts to seize her. She throws off her plaid
 and hat ; smiles, blushes, and speaks in her
 natural voice.)*

Jes. My own true shepherd lad !

Rob. My Jessie ! Can it be ? Can I believe
 Mine eyes ?

Jes. You may : and more—my hand, my heart,

My all be thine ; dear, faithful, noble youth !
Thy true and honourable love deserves them well.

Rob. Is this not all a glorious dream ? My love !
My dearest Jessie ! May I call thee mine,
Now, and for ever ? Blessed be this day,
This flowery brae, and thy sweet, wily self,
Thou kind and generous maiden !

Jes. I must home,
And for the future quit the shepherd craft,
Since I have now regain'd my faithful swain,
“ I'll gie him my tocher, my heart, an' my han',
An' the yellow-hair'd laddie shall be my gudeman !”

[*Exeunt.*

VI.

THE HARVEST-FIELD.

When wild war's deadly blast was blawn,
And gentle peace returning,
And eyes again wi' pleasure beam'd,
That had been blear'd wi' mourning,
I left the lines and tented fields,
Where lang I'd been a lodger—

BURNS.

Still shearing and clearing
The tither stooked raw,
Wi' clavers and haivers
Wearing the day awa.

BURNS.

CHARACTERS.

JAMES GORDON, *in love with Mary* }
 Stewart. } *Officers.*
GEORGE IRVING, *his comrade.* }
MR STEWART.
MARY STEWART, *his daughter, in love with Gordon.*
BOY, *son to Mr Stewart.*

ANDREW HAY, *the Grieve, or Overseer.*

HUGH. }
LAWRENCE. } *Reapers.*
SANDY. }
ROBIN CRAIK. }
ANNIE. }
TIBBY. }
KATE CRAIK. }

THE HARVEST-FIELD.

SCENE I.

*The rising ground above the Forth, near Tullibody,
upon the base of the Ochils.*

Enter JAMES GORDON and GEORGE IRVING, two brother officers, on their return home from Spain.

Irv. What ! not a word to cheat the weary miles
That lengthen on our march ? Why, I have seen
A gallant pace him to the place of doom,
And wear a brow less gloomy ! Cheer thee, man !
Is this a welcome to thy native land ?
Does that dark sullen brow, that muddy eye,
That gather'd lip, befit a time like this ?
Beshrew me, Gordon, but I think thy heart
Is yet among the orange-groves of Spain,
And home's no home for thee !

Gor. I pray thee, cease ;
Irving, my heart is very sad.

Irv. Thy heart!
 Speak not but truly of the *absent*, comrade!
 Some dark-hair'd, olive-tinted maid is now
 The casket where that jewel plighted lies.
 Well, I *did* think thou wouldst have hailed return
 In other guise than this. I've check'd the words
 That oft were struggling on my lip, to mark
 Thy pensive mood; and save a glow that rush'd
 Unbidden o'er thy cheek and brow—a glance
 Of fiery pride that kindled in thine eye—
 When on thy view first broke yon stately hall,
 Deep bosom'd 'mid its groves of peace, thou mightst
 Have been a mere mute walking thing of wood.

Gor. And know'st thou not to whom that hall
 belongs?

Irv. No; nor unless indeed it be my hap
 To pass it with a guide more talkative
 Than thou art, am I likely.

Gor. 'Tis a hall
 Whither the warrior oft, in days to come,
 Shall bend his steps, as to a hallow'd shrine,
 Worthy the deepest reverence of his heart:
 And in the page which bears the many names
 Of Scotia's heroes, brightly blazon'd forth
 Brave Abercrombie, red Aboukir's Lord!
 Shall thine appear!

Irv. Well might it wake the fire
 That seems to sleep so dead-like in thee, Gordon.
 There's not a man who calls this mountain-land,
 With its wild glens and waving heaths, his home,

But feels his heart bound at that noble name,
 And treads with prouder step his native sward
 In loftiest mien and bearing.—But, my friend,
 My fellow-soldier, prithee *do* abate
 This most unsocial gloom, that clouds thy soul :
 No glance of recognition lightens o'er
 These old remember'd scenes ; thou dost not bid
 A stranger welcome to thy native hills ;—
 It is not well.

Gor. Bear with me yet a little.
 A leaden weariness lies on my heart ;
 And thoughts of busy import crowding come,
 Choking my utterance.

Irv. Why, give them vent—
 Speak them : they cannot be so wayward, wild,
 Or dreary, but they must as far excel
 This stifling midnight silence, as the burst
 Of the fierce tempest from the low-hung cloud,
 Where slept its terrors, does the brooding, dim,
 And scowling aspect of its treasured gloom.

Gor. Let me intreat thee, Irving, cease. I know
 Thou dost not wish to pain me.

Irv. No, I wish
 To lead thee from what pains thee.

Gor. Tis in vain ;
 It dwells too deeply.

Irv. Do not think so. Come,
 Cast round thine eye familiar ! Note each hall,
 Grey tower, green hill, and dusky glen's far depth ;
 Whether renown'd for deeds of other days,

Edina, sits upon her throne of rocks ;—
 Edina, by the hand of Nature framed,
 Fit dwelling for a warrior-nation's king,—
 And lifts her high unconquer'd head to heaven
 In peerless majesty !

Irv. There spoke a Scot !

Now I believe indeed thou dost not tread,
 With all unwilling feet, thy native land.
 But tell me, Gordon, why the ill-timed gloom
 That but so lately held thee sad and mute ?

Gor. Thou know'st me, and the wayward moods
 that oft,

With might that may not be controll'd, sweep o'er
 My mind till all is dark.

Irv. Why, yes ;—but yet

I should have deem'd that hope's bright imagery
 Would have expell'd them now.

Gor. Hast thou ne'er felt

A dreary boding gather o'er thy soul,
 Till hope's faint whisperings seem'd but mockery,
 And each, and all, partook the sombre cast ?

Irv. Perchance I have, one dull half-hour, or so,
 About drear midnight, on a battle-eve,
 When placed a sentinel by some lone wood,
 Where round me lay piled heaps of newly slain,
 And birds of prey, scared by my pacing step,
 Left their dire feast, and wheeling o'er my head,
 Flapp'd their broad wings, wild screaming !—rarely
 else.

Gor. What! not when all the scenes of early youth,—

The friends that *then* were, and may *now* be *gone*,—
 The joys whose memory follow'd thee afar,—
 The hopes that cheer'd thee when all else had fail'd,—
 Come in one blended vision, wearing all
 That shadowy hue which palls?

Irv. Were it not wiser
 To think them all at hand, blooming as ever?

Gor. Would I could think so!

Irv. And why could you not,
 Most gloomy man? Have you not lately heard,
 That parents, and relations, all were well?
 What would you more to turn your fears to hopes?

Gor. What would I more? Irving, I do not think
 That we, who side by side so oft have braved
 The extremest perils of the field of blood,
 Will now in peace, and in our native clime,
 Shrink from a comrade's duty.

Irv. Gordon, no;—
 I know you do not, cannot, doubt my friendship.
 But wherefore this?

Gor. There has a secret dwelt
 Long in my heart, conceal'd like the rich store
 O'er which the miser prays. There was a maid—
 Oh! she was all a lover's thought could frame,
 A lover's heart could wish—she was to me
 More than the light of day, the air I breathed;
 She was the light and life even of my soul!

I loved ;—in winning terms I told my love ;
 And, spite of fears and maiden coynesses,
 I won her blushing favour. Let me not
 Dwell on those blissful days ! Ere then my fate—
 The fate of younger brothers—as thou know'st,
 Had bound me to the ranks of war : I left
 My father's house, and all its inmates dear ;
 Sharp was the pang ! but oh ! the sharper pang
 When to the maiden of my heart I bade
 Farewell ! Years, full of sternest strife
 And bloodiest peril, since have roll'd along,—
 And my sweet cousin, does she love me still ?
 Will she glad hail her soldier from the wars ?
 Or reigns some trim and polish'd son of peace
 In that heart where her wanderer once was Lord ?
 Would that I knew !

Irv. Well, in a little time
 You will know.

Gor. But meanwhile my heart—
 My restless heart, that medium never knew,
 Is rack'd with the extremes of hope and fear ;—
 And nearer as my steps approach the goal
 Of certainty, the more my fears increase,
 Stunning my soul with hollow mutterings
 That seem to bode of her inconstancy.

Irv. Why such vain, dark, ungenerous surmises ?
You may be very constant ;—here and there
 Such wondrous things as constancy in man
 Perhaps may be : for me, I must confess
 I am no turtle-dove—I could well be

In love with twenty in a month;—but you—
 If love occasions love, sure constancy
 May spring from constancy, and your fair maid
 Must be unchanging.

Gor. - Could I but believe
 That it might be—that 'tis so !

Irv. You a lover !
 There is but little chivalry, I ween
 In such suspicions ! What, will you not own,
 That purest, loftiest love, fidelity,
 All unimpeachable in every thought,
 The unmix'd essence of each several virtue,
 Yet blended all in one harmonious whole,
 Belong—nay, cannot but belong—to woman ?
 And dare you think her fickle ?

Gor. Mock me not.
 This doubting, sinking, weary mood of mind,
 If 'tis a fault, 'tis its own punishment.
 If less my love, less were my hopes and fears.
 Well, well ; 'twill soon be o'er : An hour or two
 Will solve all doubts. See where the mid-day sun
 Shines on the lovely heights of Broomilee,
 Deepening the lustre of the yellow fields !
 There now, even now, her father's reapers ply
 The busy sickle. Would I were among them
 But one short hour unknown !

Irv. What hinders thee ?
 Could we but think on some disguise, some garb
 Of unsuspecting seeming :—now I have it !
 See where some frugal dame her well-saved gowns

Has spread to sun them, on that formal thorn ;
 'Twould be small harm to borrow one a while ;—
 I'll make thee, Gordon, like thy grandmother !—
 I'll be a blind old soldier, thou my wife.
 Come, wilt thou do't ?

Gor. Such idle foolery
 I like not much—though might it—yes it might—
 But 'tis no matter.

Irv. Do not baulk the jest.
 Thou shalt have nought to do : thou art an old,
 And, strange—a woman of few words ; I'll talk
 enough,
 Fear not, for both. They know not me. Consent,
 It is the only way to learn, unknown,
 And unsuspected, what tales rumour tells ;
 Whether your Fair One wear the willow-wreath
 For your lamented absence, or if she
 Have found some consolation in the vows
 Breathed by new lovers. Come, what say you now ?

Gor. Scarce can I say I will not, or, I will.

Irv. I'll say it for thee then—Thou wilt. Haste,
 haste,
 Ere the goodwife shall come to turn her wardrobe.
 Why, such a trick I've tried ere now. Cheer up,
 We shall, we must succeed.

Gor. Yet I confess
 My mind misgives me.

Irv. Stuff, man ! Heed it not.
 I see a dell of darksome bosom near,
 Thither betake thee ; and the task be mine

To choose what gear we want, and meet thee there.
 Thou'lt make a stalwart, gruesome carlin, Gordon,
 As I shall deck thee: And for me, fear not,
 A little fraying on a stone, or tree,
 A rent or two, will make this travelling garb
 Seem not a whit too good to be the wear
 Of an old pensioner. Come, my boy, quick march!
 Love has its stratagems as well as war,
 And we are spies, you know!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

MR STEWART'S *house*—MR STEWART *busied among papers*—MARY, *his daughter, sitting near him*—A *little Boy, her younger brother, enters running.*

Miss S. Well, little runaway, where hast thou
 been?

Boy. O, Mary! I have been—ye never saw
 The like!—Dø bid my father come!

Miss S. Hey day!

My little oracle, am I to guess
 Thy meaning through thy broken hints? Be plain,
 If breathless haste has made thee brief. Now say,
 Where hast thou been?

Boy. I've been to the harvest-field.
 And how the reapers cut the yellow grain!
 And how the lads and lasses laugh and sing!
 Do, Mary, come; and bid my father come.
 You know he'll come for you:—It is not far,
 And well he likes to see poor people happy.—
 I'm sure 'twill please him.

Miss S. You too, little sly one,
 Expect your share of pleasure, do you not?
 Well, my dear father, will you to the fields?
 Your reapers have no deep dislike to see
 Their Master's foot upon the stubble-field.

Mr S. A short space hence I will; some matters
 here
 Must first be look'd to.

Miss S. Oh no! Father, no!
 These matters should be left for in-door work
 On rainy days; but such a day as this!—
 The sky is one wide arch of stainless blue,
 The hills are russet, and the plains are gold,
 And every tree has donn'd a richer garb,—
 A changeful autumn suit. It were a crime,
 A great one, 'gainst the majesty of nature,
 To sit and waste these precious sunny hours
 Poring o'er musty papers. Shall I bring
 Your cane?

Mr S. Not yet, my dear: to day I've got
 Letters of various import, some of which
 Must be attended to immediately.

Miss S. 'Twill do as well when you return, dear
father,—

Nay, better; for but think how fresh young thoughts
Will spring up in your mind, when you have heard
The reapers' song amid the rustling corn,
And felt the wing of autumn's fickle breeze
Fanning your cheek in very playfulness!
O! you will write as if some rural muse
Inspired you. Let me lay aside a while
These dull and tiresome sheets of crabbed lines.
You will come, will you?

Mr S. Foolish girl; you talk
About you know not what. Among these sheets
Of crabbed lines is one from Spain, it tells
Of fighting fields, and—what! Why pales, and glows,
By turns, your cheek?—nay, nay, you shall not
know—

Calm thee, my child; it speaks of nothing ill.
Our gallant lads are well and prospering;
There's even some hopes, that ere the tardy foot
Of laggard time has paced o'er many months,
They may be home.

Miss S. And glad they'll be, no doubt,
Again to breathe their native air, and roam
O'er all the scenes where oft their careless feet
Bore them in sportive boyhood's early days.

Mr S. And will no hearts but theirs be touch'd
with joy?

Is there no maiden that will gladly hail
A warrior's safe return?

Miss S. O ! very like,—
If one knew where to find them.

Mr S. That's to say,
Thou know'st of none ? Ah ! Mary, thou art just
Like all thy sex : and thou wouldst vainly hide,
Under the light veil of indifference,
Feelings that make thy very soul of being ;
As if a father's anxious eye could fail
To penetrate that gossamer disguise.
But come ; I press thee not : it is enough.
I'll to the field with thee, my girl. I know
That thy kind heart *would* lighten, if it might,
The labourer's toil : and thou *dost* lighten it,
By looking, and by speaking kindly to him.

Miss S. Dear father, if you mean to be so grave,
And make such speeches—But here is your cane—
You'll come too, boy. See how his very soul
Looks through his eyes in joyous expectation.
Come, let's away.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

*The Harvest-Field—Dinner just concluded—The
Reapers enjoying half an hour's relaxation.*

Hugh. Hey, lasses ; what's befall'n ye ?—Lost
your tongues ?

Has that brent-brae your vigour clean outworn,
And left you breathless? What unlook'd for blessings

A man may meet with; and sure not the least
Is such a group of gentle, silent maidens.

Tib. There's little silence near you, Hughie
Graham.

That taunting tongue of thine ne'er rests.

Hugh. Why should it?

I have it but to use it. Bonnie Annie,
Dare you and Tibby bet with me to-day,
That you can bind grave Lawrence?

Ann. That we dare:

Dare not we, Tibby?

Tib. Ay,—and do it too,
Ere he have time to make a book-learn'd speech,
Or Hugh a clumsy joke;—although he thinks
Himself so very clever.

Hugh. Softly, lasses;
Talk not so big, till ye have done the deed.

Tib. We'll not be long with that. But have you
got

A piece of cord? or will you lend your garters?

Hugh. Come here and get them.

Tib. That will do. Now, lad,
What if we try thee first?

*(They set upon Hugh himself, and succeed in
binding him hand and foot.)*

All. Well done! Well done! *That*, lasses! Well
done you!

Hay. Now, Hugh, I think you're cheaply served,
my lad,

Nay, spur not ; 'tis in vain,—the knots are firm,—
'Tis no slim business this. What say'st thou, Hugh ?
Art thou tongue-tied, too ? Poor lad, fairly beat !
Now loose him, lasses.

Ann. No, not till he own
That he's completely master'd.

Lawr. Why, what need
Is there for owning or denying that ?
Lo, where he lies ! bound in the very bonds
That he devised for others.

Hugh. Spare me ! spare me !
Thy learned speech, good Lawrence. Come, you
traitors !

I'll own I'm beat : and I forgive you too,
Though I had scarce fair play.

Tib. No murmurings,
Else shalt thou lie there till thou shalt be glad
To yield to our worst terms.

Lawr. I intercede :
For me the weird was meant, and I should be
Not undeserving of it, did I not
Now do my best to mitigate his doom.

Tib. Bless us, what pretty words ! Do, Lawrence,
now,
Forget thy books a while, and try to speak
As fits the harvest-field.

Ann. Well, Hughie lad,
And are we friends again ?

SINGS.

Awa' ye fretfu' carles a',
 We dinna want ye here ;
 Your crabbed words, and looks sae sour,
 Wad only spoil our cheer :
 The sunshine, an' the glorious sky,—
 The gloaming's dewy air,—
 Earth's beauties a', free we enjoy ;
 What could we wish for mair ?

It's no the coffers fu' o' gowd,—
 It's no the lordly birth,—
 But it is the sterling honest heart
 That makes the man o' worth :
 An' though his frame be worn and bent,
 An' plain his garb may be,
 There's honour in his manly breast,
 An' freedom fires his ee.

When cheerfu' neighbours meet a blink,
 To ca' the lightsome crack,
 It isna wrang a' cares an' toils
 To cast ahint their back.
 Then gie's your hands, my hearty chieils,
 My cronies frank and free,—
 There's mony greater, richer men,—
 But blyther canna be.

There then :—so much for me,—but well I know
 My singing would spoil any song.

Lavr.

Not so,

'Tis excellent indeed ! And in your song

There runs besides a sentiment of truth.

The poor are Heaven's own favourites ; they are
taught

To look beyond this vain world for their home ;
While oft the rich man's soul is earthward drawn,
Even by the strong attraction of his lands.

Hugh. Ay, ay, you may philosophize indeed !
But I should like to spur my noble steed
O'er my own acres ; or to list the roar
Of a bold water-fall, in some wild glen
That own'd no lord but me.

Hay. So should we all,
No doubt, whate'er we sing or say. Now, Tibby,
'Tis your turn next : we'll have the song go round
Just like a toast.

Tib. Well, there's but little good
In long refusals, if I must at last.
I'll try—if I knew what.

SINGS.

Why should I weep, why should I sigh,
An' beat my breast, and rive my hair,
As ne'er anither jo had I,—
As loss o' ane should bring despair ?
Though winds should waft him far frae me—
Till boundless oceans roll between ;
Or though he should inconstant be,
I'll be nae waur than I hae been.

I'll ne'er gang wanderin' in the wood
By moonlight, pining a' my lane ;
Nor sit in droopin', dowie mood ;
As if a' hopes at ance were gane.

A storm may blacken owre the sky
 Hiding Love's young and smiling ray,
 I'll wait awee, 'twill soon blaw by,—
 The next may be a brighter day.

But tent me, lad, I'm in nae haste,—
 I'm young—I've time enough to spare
 The frolic sports of youth to taste,—
 'Tis yet owre soon for sober care.
 This heart o' mine is yet my ain,
 In spite o' Love's saft pawky wile ;
 Then haste thee, laddie, back again ;
 I'll keep it for thy sake a while.

Hugh. Well sung, my girl ! there is some spunk
 in that !

Lawr. Well, I must say, I do not greatly like
 Such unmoved, reckless——

Hugh. Lawrence, fie, oh fie !
 How can you criticise a woman's song ?
 Take it with thankfulness, be what it may.
 But such a song ! And so well sung ! Indeed
 You are too rude.—Come, Sandy, 'tis you next.
 You have an ear, I know, and partly guess
 Your voice is not amiss.

Sand. When lasses sing,
 And sing so frankly, 'twould be very wrong
 In me to make a coil, and stop the pleasure
 Of hearing them again ; though I can boast
 Nought of my voice or ear.

Hay. Fear not, my lad,
You'll do quite well enough.

Sand. At least I'll try
To do my best.

SANDY SINGS.

'Tis sweet wi' blithesome heart to stray
In the blushing dawn o' infant day ;
But sweeter than dewy morn can be,
Is an hour i' the mild moonlight wi' thee.
 An hour wi' thee, an hour wi' thee,
 An hour i' the mild moonlight wi' thee,
 The half o' my life I'd gladly gie
 For an hour i' the mild moonlight wi' thee,

The garish sun has sunk to rest ;
The star o' gloaming gilds the west ;
The gentle moon comes smiling on,
And her veil o'er the silent earth is thrown :
 Then come, sweet maid, O come wi' me !
 The whispering night-breeze calls on thee ;
 O, come an' roam o'er the lily lea,
 An hour i' the mild moonlight wi' me.

For wealth let warldlings cark and moil,
Let Pride for empty honours toil,
I'd a' their wealth and honours gie
For ae sweet hour, dear maid, wi' thee.
 An hour wi' thee, an hour wi' thee,
 An hour i' the mild moonlight wi' thee ;
 Earth's stores and titles a' I'd gie
 For an hour i' the mild moonlight wi' thee.

Hugh. Well done, *mild*, silent Sandy !—On my word,

Thou hast more mettle than I dreamt of—far !

Sand. It is not always he that says the most,
Whose heart has best and deepest feelings.

Hay. There,
Take that, Hugh ! Now you're answer'd ; are you not ?

Hugh. Why, yes : but I'm so used to give a gibe,
That I can surely well afford to take one :
Besides, I like a good home-thrust, bestow'd
Boldly, and cleverly, though on myself.
Who's next ? O, Annie, lass, give us your lilt,
As well you can ! Some blithesome lay, no doubt,
Will be your choice.

Ann. No, Hugh ; indeed it is not.
I like a song to have a happy tone ;
But with a dash of sadness in it, too.
It sinks upon the heart with softening fall,
Like dew upon a violet ; and 'tis sweet
To feel an infant sigh stir on the heart,
Not our own sorrow's offspring.

Lavr. Your choice, Annie,
Will sure be best : Pray, favour us.

ANNIE SINGS.

O sweet is the blossom o' the hawthorn tree,
The bonnie milky blossom o' the hawthorn tree,
When the saft westlin wind, as it wanders o'er the lea,
Comes laden wi' the breath o' the hawthorn tree.

Ann. No offence,
Good clown ; you knew no better.

Hugh. There, again,
I'm grown a butt for each one's arrowy wit,
To aim at. But, good Lawrence, let us hear
Your warbled melody.

Lawr. I neither sing
To please thee, Hugh ; nor yet shall I forbear
Through dread of thy lame taunts : I shall not be
The first to interrupt our fine arrangement
Of circling harmony ;—unless, indeed,
My strains be unmelodious.

LAWRENCE SINGS.

Autumn winds are round me wailing,
O'er the skies deep clouds are sailing,
Sere leaves one by one descending,
From the branches o'er me bending.
Fitful gales ! I love your sighing ;
Leaves around me drooping, dying,
While ye rustling fall before me,
Pensive thoughts crowd darkly o'er me.

Hopes I've seen out-budding lightly,
Fortune's day-shine smiling brightly ;
But hopes are sear'd, day-shine departed,
And I am lone and broken-hearted.
Pale leaves, fall ! dark clouds, benight me !
Sights of gloom alone delight me.
Wilder raise, ye winds, your measure !
Sounds of woe are all my pleasure.

Hugh. Dear me ! a most pathetic ditty truly !
 Poor Lawrence ! broken-hearted too ! Poor lad,
 I pity you ! Was she so very cruel ?
 Would she not listen to your tender tale ?
 Most moving, and most melancholy !

Lawr. *Hugh,*
 This is past all endurance : were it not
 For other sakes than either thine or mine,
 I would—

Hay. Come, come ;—no quarrelling ! Nay, lads,
 This is both childish, foolish, and improper :
 Why poison our enjoyment with your broils ?

Hugh. I own the fault was mine ; although indeed
 I did not think to give so much offence ;
 But my tongue often runs beyond my reason,
 And says more than I meant it.

Lawr. 'Tis enough,
 I have no wish to quarrel with thee, Hugh ;
 So 'tis all over.

Tib. Here comes Robin Craik,
 And a strange-looking couple with him. See
 Such an uncouth old woman ! Well, I think
 The soldier was not difficult to please !
 But he seems blind, she leads him ; that explains
 His choice. O could we get old Robin now
 To sing some of his queer old-world songs !

Hay. Well, Robin Craik !

Rob. Well, Andrew Hay ! What next ?

Hay. What next? why, I half-thought you were not coming.

Rob. But I have come; and sooner than I meant. I went to turn the cattle from the corn, While my old Kate help'd home the dinner things, That we might let these lazy younkers rest; And on my way I met this man-o'-war And his trim consort—hail'd them—they enquired What point to steer for Broomilee: I've tow'd Them hither—with a good look-out a-head, Where they may catch the very point and bearing—

Hugh. Come, my old ship, pray quit your smug-gling slang, And give us landsmen's language. But d'ye know There has a law been made, that each man here Must sing his song? and you are just in time: So, if you please, begin.

Rob. Please? if I please! Some less would serve for Robin, were it not That Hugh is making a request. But come, Reach me that bottle there, that I may wet My whistle with a drop o' mountain dew.— Aye; now I'm for you.

ROBIN SINGS.

Come listen to me, my cronie leal,
An' I'll tell ye a tale ye maun aye conceal;
Wha think ye has set my wee heart in a low,
But a hoyden lass wi' a carroty pow.

This lovely lass is straught an' lang,
 An' owre the riggs like a grue can spang,
 Her grey, grey een sae wildly row,
 And waves sae bright her carroty pow.

O mony a bonnie lass I've seen,
 An' owre the lugs in love I've been,
 But a' was nought to this burning low
 For the hoyden lass wi' the carroty pow.

This heart o' mine, oh dear ! oh dear !
 Will ne'er again be itsell, I fear ;
 Red links o' love around it glow
 For the hoyden lass wi' the carroty pow.

Hugh. Well done ! old boy ; why, that's the best
 song yet !

Forgive me, lasses ! Welcome here, old soldier !
 Right welcome to a harvest-field of peace !
 Your harvest-fields are of a sterner sort ;
 Yet there, I hope, you've reap'd your own full share
 Of honest wealth, and honourable laurels.

Old Sol. Why, lad, there's little going for poor
 privates

But scanty gleanings, while the rich sheaf goes
 To those who win it easier. Howsomever,
 I've got my share of knocks, and got besides
 A little pension to keep green my bones.
 But it has been so long my daily wont
 To march and counter-march, that for my life
 I cannot keep at home : so here we go,
 My good old wife and I, campaigning on,
 Over the country, e'en where chance may lead.

Ann. And does she like that roving life as much
As you do ?

Old Sol. Nay, 'twould pose a conjuror
To answer that. She has one property,
A precious one, my good old Sal, not twice
On a day's march she'll speak ; except it be
A Yes, or No, at times, merely to keep
Me in some countenance. Ah, bonnie lasses !
Could ye but learn to be like her, how bless'd
Unspeakably would be your lucky husbands !

Tib. What say you, Hugh, to that ?

Hugh. Not much, indeed.

I like to talk ; but I should quickly tire
Had I the whole to do. Besides, I'm sure
'Twould be a perfect torture to poor women
To keep such utter muteness ; and I'm far
From wishing to be cruel to the darlings.

Hay. But Hugh, we have not got your song.

D'ye mean

To put us off with talk ? we get enough
Of that from you right cheaply. Come, your song.

Hugh. O yes ; I'll sing a song, such as I have ;
And with what skill I can.

HUGH SINGS.

The drum roll'd loud, the trumpet peal'd, and war was in their
swell ;

And gallant youths came mustering fast, and maidens' tears fast
fell.

Fair Helen sunk on Charlie's breast, while round his neck she
 clung,
 And vows o' love and constancy fell frae her faltering tongue.

Away then sped our gallant lads, away to met the fae,
 Pale, pale grew many a lovely cheek, and many a heart was wae,
 And long fair Helen sigh'd, and aft the parting pledge she prest
 Fond to her lips, then treasured it upon her heaving breast.

But woman's heart's a light thing, and lightly can change,—
 And woman's eye's a wandering thing, and wide is its range :—
 A youth wi' lily hand, saft glance, and sweetly flattering tongue,
 Has won the fickle maid,—away her Charlie's pledge she flung.

Then word has gane ayont the sea, an' Charlie's heart was sair,
 O'er his bent brow a shadow pass'd—a darkening o' despair ;
 He drew his sword half frae the sheath, and on the bare blade gazed,
 And in his stern-set eye a gleam of fate and vengeance blazed.

The faithless pledge frae near his heart wi' trembling hand he
 took,—

The fiery flush his dark cheek left, and safter grew his look ;—
 “ False though she be I love her well, and deed o' mine shall ne'er
 For her ae pang, ae starting tear, ae bursting sigh prepare !”

* * * * *

Hugh. But what's the matter, soldier, with your
 wife ?

She's suddenly ta'en ill. Look to her, lasses !
 She sobs and quivers with convulsive shudder ;
 I fear she's very ill.

Old Sol. Oh no ! 'tis nothing ;
 She'll soon be well—you see she's better now.

[*Aside.*] Nay, Gordon, be a man ! you will mar all
With this ill-timed emotion !

Gord. Oh ! my friend,
Mark'd you that song ? It is an omen dark.

Irv. Tush ! do not be so weak ! That female garb,
Has it unsex'd thee ?—She is well, quite well,
Thanks to you, friends, the megrim fit is o'er.

Ann. But, soldier, what does ail her ? Does she oft
Fall into fits like that ?

Old Sol. Oh, no ; not often :
And then she's well again ere you can say
That she was ill.

Ann. I fear you love her not :
You make so light of it.

Old Sol. Love her not ! Girl !
We love like Antony and the fair Queen
Of reedy Egypt : for each other's sake
We would not think it much to lose the world.

Ann. Oh, what a precious thing man's heart would
be,
Were it but like his words !

Old Sol. Why, bonnie lass,
How know you but it is ? 'Tis woman's art
To blame poor mankind ; while the changeful moon
Is the apt emblem of thy fickle sex ;—
At least we soldiers find it so.

Ann. Soft, now !
You speak not as you think. Full many a maid
Pines for her wanderer, hoping his return
Till hope itself is hopeless ; he the while

Revels in lawless freedom, spending ne'er
 A thought on her who for his absence mourns,
 And daily for his safety prays to heaven.

Old Sol. Come, come; you're too severe: 'twould
 never do

To sigh on guard, like shepherd on green hill
 Musing upon his shepherdess. We need
 Somewhat to keep our hearts up.

Ann. Never, then,
 Speak slightingly of woman's constancy!
 O, there be true-love tales, that, were they told—
 But *we* need not go very far to seek
 Examples; there's our sweet young lady, she
 Might have had woers plenty; but she shuns
 Them all, and keeps the faith she pledged
 To her brave cousin in the wars.

Old Sol. Indeed!
 If that be true, she is a rare one.

Ann. True!
 Why should I say it, if it were not so?
 You know its truth, Hugh Graham!

Hugh. I do right well:
 And I've been sad to think on all the fears
 That oft must rack her gentle heart. But hush!
 See where she comes across the stubble-field
 Lightly and gracefully, as trips a fawn
 Across the woodland glades;—the laird her father
 Feels not the touch of her soft silken arm,
 That like a woodbine folds in his;—her brother,
 All joy, wheels round them in his sportive race,

Too happy to walk slowly. Lawrence, say,
 In all thy books or thy imaginings,
 Hast thou e'er read, or seen, or dreamt of aught
 So sweet, so beautiful, affectionate—
 So like a glimpse of what there might have been
 Had Eden still been tenanted by man
 In his first state of happy innocence?
 O blessings, blessings on them!

Lawr. In my heart
 There dwells a rapturous echo to thy words.
 And oft I've wish'd that Avon's peerless bard
 Could be revived, to see how far excell'd
 Are even *his* fictions by pure Nature's work.
 But soft! they near us.

Grieve. Come, lads, 'tis now time
 To get to work again.

Irv. [*Aside.*] Gordon, what think'st thou now?

Gord. I cannot think!
 My soul is drunk with rapture! She is mine—
 My own—my lovely!—

Irv. Would we were away!
 I see no good in staying now.—Besides,
 You cannot keep in bounds that restless joy,—
 It will betray us.

Enter MR and MISS STEWART.

Mr S. Health to you, lads and lasses! Pray sit
 still:
 Take out your breathing-time! Fie, Andrew Hay,

Give them their full allowance ; never stand
For a few minutes more. How look the crops ?

Hay. As well as heart could wish, sir ; there
will be

For man and beast abundance, with a blessing.

Miss S. Well, Annie, how are you, this sunny day ?
I hope it harms you not.—Tibby, I'm glad
To see you look so well in spite of toil.

Ann. We thank you, ma'am : we're used to sun
and toil,
So used that it can do us little harm.

Miss S. Yes, Annie, that good-humour'd face of
yours
Would not be easily spoil'd by sun or storm.—
O ! Robin Craik, I hope your wife is well ?
I see her not.

Robin. Yonder she's coming, ma'am :
Nought ails her but a spice of crabbedness ;
And that's no very new, nor deadly ailment.

Miss S. Robin, how can you say so ! But I know
You love her ne'ertheless.

Robin. Oh ! hugely, doubtless ;—
My amiable old rib !—but softly, softly !—

Enter KATE CRAIK.

Kate. So, there ye lie, ye lazy limmers ! Up
And to your hooks ; it's lang, lang past the time.

Miss S. O Kitty ! are you there ? I hope you're
well ?

Kate. Mony kind thanks t'ye, ma'am : I'm no that ill.

But stop—what have we here ? twa randy beggars !
A sodger an' his wife ! Ay, ay, just sae !
They strut parading wi' their drums an' trumpets,
An' make fine speeches about wealth an' glory ;—
But bide a wee,—they'll learn anither sang,—
A meal-pock an' a stick,—that's aye the end o't !

Hugh. What, Kate, our brave defenders !

Kate. Fiddlesticks !

Brave ! Sorrow mean them ! they're weel paid for't
a' !

Defenders ! Set them up ! a bonnie crew
Of idle, gude-for-naething cheat-the-wuddies !
Defenders ! quo' the callant ! I hae seen
The day I wadna thought it ony pinch
To fleg a dozen o' them wi' the tangs !

Old Sol. Hold there, good woman ! with your
tongue you might ;—

For that's your weapon : and upon my word
You're mistress of it.

Kate. I had muckle need,
When I forgather wi' sic loons as you.
But haud a blink yet ! Are ye honest, wife ?
Where got ye that braw shawl ? that douce-like
mutch

Wi' the lang lappets ? an' that sonsy gown
O linsey-woolsey ? I think I've some right
To claim acquaintance wi' them. Let me see—
Ech ! sirs ! a man ! a sodger !—

Miss S. Can it be?—
 It is—it is—my Gordon!—
 [*Runs to him and falls in his arms.*]

Gord. My own sweet Mary!

Mr S. Nephew, is it you?
 Welcome, right welcome to your native land!
Gord. Sweet lovely cousin! Oh, look up! look up!
 It is thy Gordon holds thee to his heart!—
 It is his voice that calls thee! Speak, oh, speak!
 Let thy soft murmur'd words melt on my soul!—
 What, have I kill'd thee?—That awakening sigh—
 Dearer to me than airs from paradise—
 It says she lives! my Mary!

Miss S. My own Gordon!
 Art thou indeed return'd, and safe?

Mr S. Why, this
 Is better than romance! What if we have,
 To crown the adventure of the Harvest-Field,
 A wedding and our harvest-home together?

Irv. Adieu now to campaigning, comrade! Well!
 Would some such luck were mine! But I may hope
 To have at least one happy day, when I
 Shall be the bridegroom's man, and lead the sports,
 At the glad wedding, and blithe Harvest-Home!

[*Exeunt.*]

VII.

THE BUSH ABOON TRAQUAIR.

Hear me, ye nymphs, and every swain,
I'll tell how Peggy grieves me;
Though thus I languish, thus complain,
Alas! she ne'er believes me:
My vows and sighs, like silent air,
Unheeded, never move her;
At the bonnie bush aboon Traquair,
'Twas there I first did love her.

CRAWFORD.

THE BUSH ABOON TRAQUAIR.

DAVIE. JAMIE.

Dav. Married or not, 'tis all the same, I see :
There always is a something in the way
To break our rest and pine us. There's myself ;—
I once was plump and rosy : Mark me now !
My shoulder-blades stick staring through my coat ;
My ribs broad, bare, apart, as they belong'd
To a mere skeleton ; my sharp shin-bones
Are perfect scythe-blades grown ; and for my face,
I dare not bend me o'er a crystal pool,
It looks so like a death's-head ;—would you know
The cause ? hush, that's a secret ! yet among
The hills it may be mention'd—I am married !—
Then, there's poor Jamie ;—once a blither lad
Dwelt not in all the Border :—See him now !
His dumb flock round Minchmoor he dumbly tends,
For hours as mute as they : he silent sits,
Watching the silver Leithen hastening on

To join the sweeping Tweed, as he would try
 To number its swift ripples as they pass:
 He sits upon a flowery bank, and plucks,
 One after one, spread gowans, gazing oft
 Into their open bosoms, as if they
 Were living things, and he could read their thoughts.
 He lifts his pipe, but sobs obstruct its sound ;—
 Or, if he plays, so woful is the measure,
 It makes the very echoes melancholy :
 His eye is dim and sunken, and his cheek
 All colourless and thin :—yet he's not married !
 But, if I'm not mistaken very far,
 Love is his ailment. Well, it's much the same ;—
 O woman, woman !—bliss and bane of man ;—
 “ There is no living with you nor without you !”
 Jamie ! hey ! hear'st thou, man ! I pray thee speak,
 If but for thine own good :—these heavy sighs,
 As I have heard my grandmother declare,
 Send each a drop of life-blood from the heart,
 And starve it by degrees.

Jam.

I little care

Though her strange notion were a sober truth,
 Were but its operation quicker.

Dav.

Nay,

Soothly to speak, your wasting cheek, dead eye,
 And feeble step, proclaim its verity,
 And its speed too, I think. But tell me, Jamie,
 In downright earnest, what it is that grieves you :
 For though I am not quite cut out to be
 A sentimental confidant, I know

That uttering your griefs would do your heart
Incalculable good.

Jam. I know not that :—

'Twould be but tearing open all my wounds ;
Making them bleed afresh.

Dav. 'Twere better so,

Than festering in concealment : probe them well,
I'll warrant them heal the sooner. And, besides,
Now that I think on't, I'm the fittest person
To hear your woes :—we think not quite alike,—
Will disagree, of course, and you'll be led
To see both sides o' the subject, which as yet
You have not done.

Jam. I have a mind to try

The experiment.

Dav. Oh ! do so !

Jam. Well, I will.

My Peggy !—thou hast seen her ? Winter's stars
And winter's skies are not so bright, so blue,
As are her eyes ; the dewy sweet-brier loses
Both bloom and sweetness near her breathing lip ;
And oh ! her voice !—the music of the brooks,
The warbling of the linnet, thrush, or lark,
Beneath the eye of morn, or when mild eve
Casts wide her humid veil around,—all, all
Would I forego to hear my Peggy speak.

Dav. A rich assortment these of peerless charms !
Oh ! what a worse than prodigal is love !
Beauties, of which an angel might be proud
His lavish hand bestows on—a mere woman !

Then, fond idolater ! he blindly worships
 The creature of his own formation ! Thus
 'Tis a fair being, gifted and adorn'd
 With all of loveliness your mind can dream,
 And not the real Peggy as she is,
 That fills your heart.

Jam. No, she is all, and more
 Than I could e'er describe. But were she not,
 While she is so to me, 'tis all the same :
 If, ever when I see her, visions bright,
 And sweet, and beautiful come o'er my mind,
 Still let me love her for those lovely dreams.

Dav. Good sooth, ye'll get a wakening, lad, I
 dread !

A right unpleasant one ! Yet say, meanwhile,
 Why should those lovely visions break your rest,
 And wear you to a shadow !

Jam. 'Tis because
 Love rouses all the heart's capacities
 For soft enjoyment, and, when unrequited,
 Their fervent cravings inward turn, and drain
 The very source of life.

Dav. Then give them scope !
 Go to your Peggy ; tell her your soft tale :
 I'll warrant she'll give favourable hearing.—
 But mind you flatter well. The woman breathes not
 That is not fond of flattery.

Jam. So you
 From your experience seem to think ; but I
 Have learn'd another lesson. I *have* gone,

Have dallied in half-friendship and half-love,
 Basking in the dear sunshine of her smiles ;
 While, unrestrain'd, her soft yet cheerful tongue
 Pour'd its glad music on my raptur'd ear.
 At length, ah, fond presumptuous fool ! I dared
 To hope she felt more than mere friendship's
 warmth ;—

I hinted of my love ; she would not seem
 To understand : plainlier I told my tale,—
 And then——

Dav. What then ?

Jam. Ah ! then !—I have no heart
 To prosecute the sad recital.

Dav. Yet

I beg you'll do it. With but half your tale
 How can I either sympathize, or give,
 What may procure me little thanks, advice ?

Jam. She tried at first to laugh my serious mood
 Away. It would not do. My heart was in the issue,
 And life and fate hung upon every word.—
 Her laughter fell,—her light jest pass'd away,
 Aimless and pointless ; her bright eye grew sad ;
 And low and solemn grew her silver voice,
 With all its dulcet words. Again I spoke,
 Again pour'd forth the secret of my soul,
 With such full, gushing depth of feeling, as
 None ever can speak twice. She sadly smiled ;
 But in her smile there was no food for hope :
 It told of pity for the misery
 That it must needs inflict. She spoke ; soft words—

And chosen for their softness—breathed to me
 A gentle, but a firm and full denial.
 I strove to woo her to relent :—'twas vain.
 She check'd my wooing ;—hinted earlier ties ;—
 Gave me cold pity, but refused me love :
 And ever since, to stifle every hope,
 And cut off possibility, she shuns me.
 While I—I yet survive, and bear about
 A dead, cold heart, entomb'd within my bosom.
 Say, then, have I not cause to droop, to pine,
 To linger near the Bush aboon Traquair,—
 ('Twas there her early friendship bless'd my soul,
 'Twas there she spoke the death-doom to my hopes!)
 As haunts a miser's ghost the secret spot
 Where sleeps his buried treasure? Have I not
 Had cause to be a lonelier thing than yet
 I have been?

Dav. Why, to say the truth, I think
 It was a happy riddance! Oh! no doubt
 You were too rude, you were not good enough
 For her, the haughty one! Could one have got
 Slyly a peep into her heart, I ween
 He might have seen both scorn and triumph there.
 She was not worth your while, the saucy dame!

Jam. Wellnigh thou movest my laughter, empty
 man!

Think'st thou the cherish'd memory of those days,
 When the bright bliss of Peggy's kindly smile
 Was gleaming round my soul, can pass away
 Before the weak breath of a dull surmise?

Dav. If she has slighted thee, slight her in turn :
'Tis but mere self-defence.

Jam. I cannot slight her :—
Nor would I, if I could : I love her frankness ;
And will do, should it kill me.

Dav. As you please.
Yet I must own dislike, malice, revenge,
Or any such, are serpents in the bosom ;
They sting where they are nourish'd. Since 'tis so,
Bid her a last farewell ! Pluck up your heart ;
And even go try your fortune with another.

Jam. No ; that may never be ! Once to have been
Rejected is enough for me.

Dav. Stuff ! man,
Rejected once, and break your heart for that !
A high farce, truly ! Not for fifty times !—
Come, you'll have better luck next time : if not,
At least you'll gain experience. Try again !

Jam. I tell thee, no, never ! I do not blame
My Peggy ; but the woman does not breathe
That shall again reject my proffer'd love.

Dav. Nay, that's pure pride. But be it so ; I think,
If I may speak my real sentiments,
You never form'd so wise a resolution.

Jam. Do you thus change your tune ?

Dav. This is no change ;—
At least no new one. If you knew what I—
And I believe what every married man—
Could tell you, you would thank your lucky stars,
The longest day you have to live, you would.

Jam. Why so ?

Dav. 'Tis scarcely to be thought that I
Should pick out every flaw in mine own plaid,
And hold them up for your amusement ; yet
I owe you either warning or advice,
Or at the least a few quiet friendly hints.—
I think the experience that another pays
The purchase of, the cheapest, and the best :—
But I'm a true Scot—wise behind the hand.

Jam. Well, then, my sapient and experienced
friend,
Will you bestow on me a modicum
Of this your dear-bought wisdom ?

Dav. I shall try.
A well-stock'd farm, a snug warm house, were mine,
Left by my father ; and,—Oh, dear !—Oh, dear !—
They're mine yet ; but I'm now not mine myself ;—
I have not—no, in truth !—the heart to tell
How I destroy'd my liberty and peace.

Jam. Why, this is peevish, childish !

Dav. Be it so,—
I am a peevish child—I cannot help it ;—
My spirit fails me but to think upon it.
There's yet one way, though. In a musing mood,
One day I somehow got my story wrought
Into a kind of song : I croon it o'er
An hundred times a-day—I'll do it now,
If you think fit, and that will tell you all.

Jam. I shall be quite delighted. It will be
At once a song to soothe me, and a piece

Of sage and grave experience to advise.
I'll list the lay, and learn the lesson. Come!

DAVIE SINGS.

I wat it is a canty place,
This cozy wee bit cot o' mine ;
The sun blinks blithely o'er the braes,
An' a' day lang it drinks his shine ;
But yet within its four bit wa's,
Alack, it hauds a scalding quean ;
It's sun without an' storm within,—
It's no just what it might hae been.

The howlet-crag towers braid an' high,
In vain the snell nor-west may blow ;
The hill comes snugly elbowing roun'
An' bears the bitter east awa ;
The sunny south, the breathing west,
Come flichtering up the haughs sae green :—
My wifie's tongue-blast never lowns,—
It's no just what it might hae been.

The little burnie bickers by,
Chirring its brisk and cheerie sang ;
The woodland minstrels gaily lilt
Their lays, the birken shaws amang ;
They meet an' murmur roun' my cot,
Blessing the hours o' dewy e'en ;—
'Tis din an' discord a' within,—
It's no just what it might hae been.

My housie ance was quiet enough,
 But dowie, dowie, a' the night ;
 A mim an' modest maid I wooed,—
 I made her mine, an' a' was right.
 But had I kend wha tnow I ken,
 I ne'er had taen the pawky quean ;
 For aye sinsyne my cozy cot
 Is far frae what it might hae been !

Dav. Ah ! lad, it is too true ! they're angels all
 So long's the love-spell lasts ; but marriage comes,
 Reverses the enchantment :—like a dream,
 Their beauties and their virtues pass away,
 And they are—what I will not name ! Your Peggy,
 So sweet, so like an angel, when she met
 Her lover at the Bush aboon Traquair ;
 Another guise had borne, had she e'er met
 Him as her husband ! You have ample cause
 Of joyful gratitude, that you have miss'd
 That boon,—once wish'd, and ever more repented.
 Scorn all the jades ! live happy as you're free !

Jam. And would you have me for the fault of
 one—

Say that it be a fault—to hold all women
 In scorn and detestation ?

Dav. That I would !
 There is not one hair's-breadth to choose upon
 Between the very worst, and those that seem
 Your spotless female saints, your perfect patterns
 Of excellence and every virtue.

Jam. What ?

And is this then indeed your true belief
Of lovely womankind ?

Dav. It is ; and built
Upon experience.

Enter DAVIE'S wife, NELLY.

Nel. How now, gudeman !
What say you ? Is it thus you talk of me ?
Of me, your lawful wedded wife and mistress ?

Dav. 'Twas all in jest, dear Nelly !

Nel. All in jest ?
And dare ye make a jest of me ? Poor gowk !
Did I refuse the laird's fourth cousin's son,
The spruce town-merchant, and a score beside,
And wed you for pure pity, thus to be
A subject for your sneers and silly songs ?
Is this your gratitude ?

Jam. The blame was mine ;
I'm sure he meant no slight to you.

Nel. He meant !
Speak for yourself, my lad ;—and, sooth to say,
That's more than you can do to purpose. Come,
Put off your sullen looks, and haste ye home ;
There, one on business waits you. And for you,
Poor slighted wooer, learn to tell your tales
Of dole and sorrow to another ear—
My husband shall have none of them. Come, come.

[*Exit DAVIE and NELLY.*

Jam. A happy couple, truly ! Let them go ;

I trust there are few such. For me, my fate
Must wear a different aspect. I shall tread
The weary wilderness of life alone ;
To none of womankind again shall I
Tender the fragments of a slighted heart—
That were an insult : But I'll cherish still
The memory of those feelings soft and pure ;
And like the ivy clustering green around
The hoary ruins of a mouldering tower,
Bestowing grace and beauty on the haunts
Of veriest desolation, they shall yield
A seeming life and freshness to my heart,
While dead and withering it sleeps beneath.
Yes—since to none a husband I may be,
Let me to all become a friend—a brother .
A sister's meek familiar love is all
That I can *now* ask or receive of woman ;
And with that I shall strive to be content.

[*Exit.*

VIII.

THE OLD MAID.

Gin living worth could win my heart,
You should not speak in vain !
But in the darksome grave it's laid,
Never to rise again.
My waefu' heart lies low wi' his
Whose heart was only mine ;
Oh ! what a heart was that to lose !
But I maun no repine.

Old Song.

THE OLD MAID.

SCENE I.

A little Cottage in a retired Glen, ALICE at the bleaching green. (Morning.)

Walter. Good morning, Alice. You begin your
work

Betimes. I need not wish you speed : the hand
Of industry, says Solomon, makes rich.
A good text that for you.

Al. For any one ;
For, if not wealth, it sure gains happiness,
The truest riches.

Wal. Oh ! that I could learn
Your secret, Alice !

Al. Secret ! Tell me, lad,
What 'tis you mean ?

Wal. 'Tis how to pass my life
Untroubled by the frowns of any one.

I would not hate, could I but cease to love,—
 No, not cease altogether—learn to bear
 A placid medium, an unruffled kindness
 Alike remote from rapture and despair.

Al. Poor lad ! has Marion been too coy ? Yes, yes,
 I see I've guess'd your ailment.

Wal. Alice, no !
 Not by an hundred fold ! That faithless one
 Has thrown at last the mask aside, and shown
 Herself in her true likeness. Coy ? no, that
 Is woman's Parthian warfare, rendering her
 The more invincible. Oh ! she is false !—
 Nay triumphs in her falseness,—flouts at me,
 And showers her smiles on George.

Al. But why is this ?
 Tell me the whole.

Wal. A few days since it chanced,
 When we were all at the sheep-shearing met,
 To blind the rest to my real love, I toy'd
 With Kate ; this Marion saw, and instantly
 Took up with George. I sought the earliest chance
 To clear the matter :—Oh ! scarce would she speak
 Or but in taunts. Grieved to the heart, I strove
 To pacify her ; sneeringly she bade
 Me keep my sweet words for my winsome Kate.
 And ever since, in very spitefulness,
 She shows to him more favour than, in truth,
 A modest maiden should to any one.

Al. And is this all ?

Wal. All ! Is it not enough ?
She mocks me,—nay, she even demeans herself
To vex me. Let her—she may rue her choice.

Al. Little know you of woman's heart ! Think you
That she would act thus were there in her breast
No love for you ? Or would she thus resent
Your favour shown to Katie, did she not
Value that favour highly ?

Wal. If I could
Believe she did——

Al. What then ?

Wal. My plans would all
Suffer a change.

Al. And what, pray, were your plans ?

Wal. To leave my native country : where to go
I had not yet determined.

Al. Well for you
That *that* point undetermined yet remains !
Believe me, there's no land like home. No land
Like that where every burn lifts up the voice
That lull'd our infant sleep,—where every tree
And every bush, and every daisied field,
Lone glen, and mountain green, is haunted rife
By the pale lovely shades of hopes and joys
That play'd around our steps in youth ! No land
Like that where sleep our fathers,—those great men,
Whose deeds and sufferings, through ages past,
Have won for Scotland this most glorious name,
“ The Warrior's, Patriot's, Poet's, Christian's Land ! ”

Oh! rather let the meanest hut that e'er,
 Placed on the rugged height of some wild heath,
 Totter'd before the winter-blast, become
 My solitary home in such a land,
 Then Paradise elsewhere!

Wal. Alice, your words
 Set all my blood on fire! I will not go,
 Unless it be to fight my country's foes.

Al. You'd better cheer her friends! Jesting apart,
 Attend to me! Soon as the gloaming casts
 Her plaid of grey o'er heath and glen, steal you
 Unseen down to my cottage: Marion comes
 And spends an hour with me full oft. To-night
 I'll sound her heart's-depth: she will tell to me
 The simple truth. You can the while, unseen,
 Hear all; then judge if you shall go or stay.

Wal. Heaven bless you for the thought! I will
 not fail
 At night-fall;—Would 'twere here!

Al. Still in extremes!
 Go, guide you like a wise man, if you can,
 You crazy-pate!

Wal. I'll try, at any rate. [*Exit.*

Al. How mankind sacrifice their own heart-peace
 For veriest folly! I'll for Marion send:
 Unless I err, her heart is not less sick
 Than Walter's. Lucky 'tis for them that I
 By both am trusted. Had I met with one
 So trusted and so minded, I had not

Been the sad lonely thing that now I am !
 But that is past ;—then let me do my best
 To warn and rescue others.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE II.

*The interior of the Cottage—WALTER concealed.
 (Evening.)*

ALICE and MARION.

Al. Come, Marion ; come away, and take a seat,
 And let me have some talk with you.

Mar. I come
 Right willingly ; for I, too, long to have
 Advice from you.

Al. Well, Marion, let me hear
 Frankly what 'tis you want.

Mar. My heart ! my heart !
 O, Alice, it will break ! The pride that gave
 Me strength among the rest has left me now.
 O, my dear Alice !

(Throws herself into Alice's arms, weeping.)

Al. Silly girl ; speak out
 And tell me what afflicts you.

Mar. I have lost—
 For ever lost my Walter

Al. How is this?
By his fault or your own?

Mar. By both, perhaps,
But most by mine.

Al. Say how.

Mar. The other day,
At our sheep-shearing feast he toy'd with Kate,
And slighted me. To be revenged, I gave
My company to George; it answer'd well,
For Walter saw and fretted. I enjoy'd
His evident uneasiness:—nay, more,
I shunn'd his proffer'd reconciliation, mock'd
And taunted him, then seem'd more kind to George.
This lasted for a day: Walter at length
Waylaid and met me near the milking fauld,
And gently, fondly, warmly, did he plead
For my lost favour.—Every word he spoke
Went to my heart; yet, in my wayward pride,
Still did I jeer and flout him—gave some hints
That I preferr'd another:—urged too far,
He fired—drew back—upraised his manly brow,
And with brief dignity bade me enjoy
The bosom-peace that springs from broken vows,—
Then stalk'd with stately step away. My heart
Knock'd at my breast to follow him,—my tongue
Trembled to call him back.

Al. Why did you not?

Mar. Because I was too proud. O! never yet
Came any good from pride, nor ever will!
He shuns me now; and I—what can I do?

O ! rather let me die than be the first
To seek a reconciliation ! yet, unless
His favour I regain, I cannot live.

Alice, what can I do ?

Al. Do ? own your fault,—
For you are most to blame with your cold pride,
And groundless jealousy.

Mar. I never can !
That were to court *him* ! no, I never can !
And even *he* would despise me !

Al. Do you think
That he loves Kate ?

Mar. Loves Kate, the yellow fright !
Ay, as I love a toad !

Al. Do you believe
He loves not you ?

Mar. I cannot tell—I think—
I thought he did :—Think you he does ?

Al. I do !
If it were *not* so, would he care with whom
You toy'd ? Or would he plead so tenderly
To win your smiles again ? Or would his heart,
Spite of its pride—nay, *by* its pride, display
Such hurt from aught less keen than slighted love ?
He loves thee, Marion ; and one little word
Of kindness timely spoken will win back,
In fondest fervour, all his heart to thee.
Will you be silent then ?

Mar. Alas ! I must !

I cannot make advances ; though I own
Most gladly wōuld I meet them.

Al. Will you give
To me permission to conduct this deep
And intricate affair ?

Mar. You mock me, Alice.
But if you could, and would—

Al. I can, and will !—
For I can see farther than you can do
What sad results might follow ; ay, and all
My heart-strings thrill with deepest sympathy,
For I have known—

Mar. Dear Alice ! do not thus
Awake that spirit, curiosity,
And leave it all unsatisfied ! you know
The dearest secrets of my heart ; let me
Share yours in turn !

Al. [*Aside.* (It might produce some good
If I should—yes, for once I will.) Do you
Long for an Old Maid's Tale ?

Mar. O ! yes : do tell it !
For often have I long'd to ask you why
You dwelt here all alone, since easy 'tis
To see that you have, as the saying runs,
Seen better days : and how it is that you,
In refutation of the silly scoff,
“ An Old Maid's crabbedness,” are still so kind,
So prudent, that the old respect, the young
Love you, and tell you all their little griefs,

Or joys, or loves ; till you have quite become
The oracle of all the country-side.

Al. Then listen to as sad a tale as e'er
Wrung tears from sympathetic listeners.
Needs not to tell from whence I drew my name
And origin,—suffice it, they were such,
That all which culture ean was done for one
Not naturally dull ; and hence it comes
That I can shrewdly guess, and rightly judge ;
In matters that less cultivated minds
Feel puzzled with :—

Mar. That, too, has often waked
My wonder.

Al. In the bloom of gay seventeen
I met a youth—not twenty were his years—
His stature, shape, and air, were fashion'd in
A mould of matchless elegance ; his eye,
His eloquent eye, beam'd full of soul ; his tongue
Discours'd sweet music ; – he was more than all
My heart had ever fashion'd in its dreams
Of manly beauty !—

Mar. Was he fair, or dark ?

Al. His eyes were blue and bright as summer
skies ;

His locks deep chestnut, clustering round his brow
In rich luxuriance, like the plighted clouds
That float around the portals of the dawn ;
His cheek—but why describe ? We met, we loved ;—
He sued, nor was rejected. Blessed days
Roll'd over us, and every passing day

More blessed than the last. But ah! no joy
That earth can give may long endure!

Mar.

What chanced?

Not unkind parents?

Al.

Marion, no! Full oft
Parents are blamed when prudence, duty bids
Them act with salutary firmness. Youth
Is all of passion and blind folly made,
And therefore to be pitied, guided, led,
Even driven to what's best. Marion, like you,
I quarrell'd with my Henry; and, like you,
Proudly refused to lend a candid ear
To his apologies; like you, I scorn'd,
I taunted, and I braved him. Gently long
He bore my petulance;—haughtier I grew:—
Proud of my power, I tyrannized;—at last,
His high heart rose, and in his swelling mood
He vow'd no more to brook my cruel taunts;
Nor ever more to see me, speak to me,
Unless I should confess that I had wrong'd
A faithful lover! When his vow I heard,
My heart died in my bosom; yet I kept
My haughty bearing, nor would speak one word
Of yielding purport.

Mar.

'Tis most strange indeed,
That thus far have your destinies and mine
Run counterparts! But say what happen'd next.

Al.

We met no more; and shortly, as I heard,
He went on board a ship about to sail
To foreign lands. How did I then regret

Sleepless, listening the howling of the storm,
 Sudden before me Henry seem'd to pass :—
 His dress, his step, and his whole air like one
 By imminent peril roused ; or wrestling fierce
 With desperate assailant. Full on me
 He fix'd his earnest eyes, he wav'd his hand
 With hasty gesture,—rapidly his lips
 Moved, but no words came forth,—save once, me-
 thought,
 An indistinct and distant echo-sound
 Murmur'd my name :—I started—gazed again—
 But he was vanish'd ! Instant on my soul
 A dread revelation rush'd.—My father's house
 Stands near the sea-beach. All unseen, I ran
 Through the thick-driving tempest to the shore.
 A steep cliff towers high-beetling o'er the wave,
 Like a sea-beacon,—to its top I flew,
 And gazed with straining eyes through the blent haze
 Of cloud and ocean-spray. The crescent moon
 With headlong speed was o'er the turbid sky
 Careering, like a sorceress dragon-drawn,
 And through the rent rack glaring luridly.
 At once a shriek of agony arose
 Upon the wild sea-verge,—at once I saw
 A huge black mass borne on the topmost surge,
 And drifting landward :—On it swept—it struck—
 The crash of shatter'd beams—the starting creak
 Of severing cordage,—man's despairing yell,
 Pierced in most horrible union through the roar
 Of warring winds and waters. From the height

O'er cliff and crevice with impetuous foot
 I bounded to the beach :—A foamy wave
 That moment to my feet its ghastly load
 Bore,—'twas a human form :—I stoop'd—I grasp'd—
 I raised it in my arms ; with one hand swept
 The dripping locks, matted with oozy sand,
 From the pale face—'twas his, Marion, 'twas his,
 And my false pride had kill'd him !

Mar. Gracious heaven !
 Should Walter go to sea—O ! tell me, Alice,
 What can I do to save him ?

Al. Own your fault.
 Or are you still too proud ?

Mar. Away with pride !
 Let truth and love direct me.

Al. 'Tis enough.
 But while your heart beats right, methinks 'twere
 best

To put you to the proof. Walter ! come forth,
 And answer for yourself !—Forgive me, Marion !
 By my desire Walter has heard the whole
 Of our past conversation : nor need you
 Blush for its tenor, his own tongue this morn
 Told me of slighted love, sorrow, despair,
 And wild determinations. You have both
 Listen'd my tale of woe : O ! thence be warn'd
 And strive against the cloud-crown'd demon Pride,
 Ere you become its victims !

Wal. If I have
 Offended thee, dear Marion, let me crave

Forgiveness, and accept my promises
Of full amendment.

Mar. Let us then exchange
Free pardon and fresh plight : for I, too, have
Been much to blame.

Al. Come, let me join your hands.
Henceforth be gentle and affectionate ;
Accommodating to each other's wants
And little failings ; and your life will be
One of unvaried happiness.

Wal. To you
The warmest thanks we owe ; for you have been
Our kindest, truest friend ! But might we ask
The sequel of your story ?

Al. There remains
Little to tell. After that dreadful night,
Reason awhile was shaken on her throne,
And Memory holds no records of that time.
At length the dark hour pass'd away ; but still
Unable to endure the sight of all
My former scenes of happiness, I left
My father's house, and wandering aimlessly
Where chance might lead, this little lovely glen
Attracted me ;—I made it my abode :
And my chief occupation since has been
To warn and counsel proud and fiery youth ;
Nor do I seek or hope a greater joy
Than such as this night has bestow'd. It is
A lonely destiny ; but yet 'tis one

That has its blessings, since it has the power
Of doing good to others. Good night, both !
Be faithful, kind, and happy !

Both. Good night, Alice !
And Heaven reward your pure benevolence !

[*Exeunt.*



IX.

LOGAN BRAES.

By Logan's streams that run sae deep,
Fu' aft wi' glee I've herded cheep,—
Herded shcep, or gather'd slaes,
Wi' my dear lad on Logan braes.
But wae's my heart thae days are gane,
And I wi' grief maun herd alane,
While my dear lad maun face his faes,
Far, far frae me, and Logan braes !

MAYNE.

LOGAN BRAES.

SCENE I.

A Farm-house—A shady lane adjoining—CATHCART walking pensively alone.

Cath. Fool, madman that I am ! I saw it well—
I knew it must be so !—Yet on to speed
The blind career of ruin !—And for what ?
Because I could not mouth a resolute *No*,
To paltry triflers, creatures whom I scorn'd ;
Yet herded with, in idle playfulness,
And suffer'd to allure me ! That I ever
Should have been such a worse than prodigal !
My soul's best hopes, like wither'd leaves, away
The ceaseless sweep of Time's broad wing has
brush'd ;
O ! could I but recall them !

Enter MOSSMAN, meeting him.

Moss. Well, my gay heart !
My king of hearts ! What sport to-night ?

Cath. None.

Moss. None,

Say you ? I think I could—but have you seen
None of our comrades ?—Silent ! Why is this ?
What is the matter ? What is wrong ?

Cath. Nothing—

At least, that you can right.

Moss. How know you that ?

I bring you news of some rare game afoot ;—
'Twill make you leap to hear it. Come along,—
Let's join the rest ;—and then—

Cath. Go, if you will :—

Go where you will ; but leave me !

Moss. That I won't !

We cannot do without you. Come, we lose
Our time for nothing.

Cath. Yes, I've lost indeed .

My time for worse than nothing ! Mossman, you
And your companions, sports, and revelries,
From this day I abjure for ever !

Moss. Good !

Capital ! Well this passes—Seriously,
What do you mean ?

Cath. I mean what I have said ;

That henceforth I have done with revelries,
And such companionship.

Moss. This is too much !

If aught annoys you, laugh it off ! Leave cares
To grey-beards ! Come, pluck up your heart, my lad !
A short life and a merry one for me !—

Cath. Pray get you hence—'twere best !

Moss. And leave you thus ?—
To be the jest of all our—

Cath. Think'st thou, fool !

I ever valued their opinions ? No !
Even when I led your song and merriment,
I from my soul despised you ! Not a man
Among you has enough of heart or head
Even to be worth the hating ! Get you gone !
My own wild passions were my tempters ; you
Were but my toys :—yet many a golden hour
I've lavish'd even with you. Go from me ! fly !
Farewell ! And as you go, take one advice !—
Pursue your calling, and discharge your duties :—
Then, and not *till* then, may you think of pleasures.

Mos. Well, I ne'er heard—

Cath. Away ! No time have I
Now to destroy in trifling !

[*Exit* MOSSMAN.

So far well ;

One step is made, one fetter reft in twain :
The next—O ! Ellen ! What must be the next ?
For the light sparkling of most empty mirth
I've lost—O ! what a treasure I have lost !—

My Ellen's heart and hand ! How can I go
 And tell her of my folly ? Yet I must—
 I will !—My heart has now to learn the lore
 Of anguish and endurance ! To my task !—
 Ye faded fields ! ye many-tinted trees !
 Ye autumn skies, so pensively severe !
 Like you I've spent my summer-days ; like you
 I feel the autumn-blight, the autumn-gloom !—
 Yes, I have sown the wind, and now I reap
 The tenfold whirlwind !—Once more, to my task !
[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

*The Banks of Logan Water—(Evening, and
 Moonlight.)*

CATHCART—ELLEN.

Cath. Sweet Ellen ! this is very kind ! I fear'd
 You might not come. I waited long, and paced
 Meanwhile around the grey and mouldering walls
 Of the old ruin ; traced the margin green
 Of lovely Logan ; footed every path
 Where we were wont to stray ; but you are come,
 And I am more than happy.

Ell.

I too thought

I ne'er should have got out unseen. There came
Some neighbours in the gloaming ;—for my life
I durst not leave the house ; but they are gone,
And I am here. I hope they saw you not ?

Cath. Fear not for them : Mine eye, ear, foot, and
hand,

Mock at the danger of surprise ;—besides,
Night, and her many shadows, lent their aid.

Ell. Night is your favourite time, I think ?

Cath. It is.

Day is the time of active toils and cares,
But night of thoughts and feelings, hopes and loves.

Ell. That's as you use them ; but sure night, sad
night,

With all its clouds and fears, may not compare
In loveliness with bright day's sunny brow.

Cath. Yes, Ellen, night is lovelier than day.
How beautiful the moon ! scaling the steeps
Of Heaven, and shedding from her starry height,
O'er sky and earth, a veil of silver grey !
See where the rippling current, tipt with light,
Troops, like a band of living things, along
In glittering procession ! Not a breath
Of wind comes o'er the trees, to speed the fall
Of the pale, dropping leaves ! Creation sleeps ;
And oh ! her sleep is calm and beautiful !

Ell. 'Tis so indeed. Yet have I seen a day—
An autumn-day—when o'er the silent sky
Lay floating just enough of vapoury clouds,
To give a grey-hair'd, venerable grace

To Nature's aspect :—earth-fruits all were stored,
 And Peace and Plenty, link'd with smiling Mirth,
 Led the gay dance ; the sun's benignant eye
 Smiled o'er the scene, as a kind father smiles,
 With looks of calm complacency and love
 On his glad children, blest and happy all
 By the full bounty of his liberal hand.

Cath. The father's bounty!—yes—well may he
 smile,

For he has done his duty. But his sons!—
 O! Ellen! What should give us bliss, alas!
 May be our bane! Our own hands madly rend
 Our own wild bosoms! Ellen!

Ell. Dear Cathcart!
 What would you say? Why do you fix your eyes
 On me so wistfully? Speak! tell me plain
 What is the matter.

Cath. 'Tis not much, perhaps,
 To any but myself. My vows of love,
 Did you believe them, Ellen?

Ell. Had I not
 Strong cause to think them true? If they were
 false—

What mean you now?

Cath. Oh! would that you could see
 The innermost recesses of my heart,
 And trust or doubt as it seem'd true or false!
 But yet I fain would ask—

Ell. I too would ask
 If aught in me gives room—no, sure 'tis grief

That darkens on your brow, and chokes your voice !
Tell it ! Or, shall I guess ?

Cath. Dear Ellen, no !

Let me, at last, act as becomes a man !
I've sought this interview with fix'd intent
To take a long, perhaps a last farewell ;
For, ere to morrow's sun has set, my steps
Shall traverse scenes unknown ; and I, perchance,
Thee, and sweet Logan Braes, may see no more !

Ell. What say you ? Can you leave me ? O ! no,
no !

'Tis all to try me !—Cruel one !

Cath. Dear maid !

Hear me a few brief moments ! I have been
A very prodigal ; my flocks, my crops,
My cattle, all—my all will not suffice
To pay my rents, my debts, and borrow'd sums :—
I cannot, will not meet it. I will go
To other lands, and war with toil and want ;
Nor e'er return, unless with ample means
To more than meet what justice may require.
Such is my purpose ; and it should not cause
One sigh to make and keep it ; but, alas !
That is an April shower, while in its train
I see the storms of winter ! I must leave—
And, leaving, must I lose thee, Ellen ?—lose
The only boon my soul ere pray'd for ?—lose
What I would gladly peril life to gain ?—
Lose thee, my only love ?

Ell. It shall not be !

I have a little—and my father—sure
 He will not see you want ! Stay, stay at home !
 Make me your wife ;—tend you the rougher toils,
 I'll tend the household cares ; and we shall soon,
 Through honest industry, and frugal care,
 Clear every score, and yet hold up our heads
 In honourable independence. Come !
 'Tis no time now for feigning ! I am thine
 If that will stay thee !

Cath. O ! ye moon and stars !
 Beheld ye ever such a woman !—No !
 Thou dearest maid ! I will not wrong thee thus !
 I were yet more unworthy than I am
 Could I avail me of thy generous proffer.
 But wheresoe'er I go, whate'er my fate ;
 The thought of thee, and of thy noble love,
 Shall be a fount of ever-springing hope,
 At which my thirsty heart shall drink large draughts,
 And with refresh'd endurance bear its lot.
 O ! now I love thee as I never did,—
 Never could love before !

Ell. Yet will you go ?
 You mock me for my fondness. Can you thus
 Pluck from mine own words what I never dreamt
 They could insinuate ? Take back your resolve,
 And stay at home on Logan Braes with me !

Cath. Were it not base to bind you to the home
 Of toilsome poverty ? to bid you wear
 The conscious red impressment of disgrace
 Stamp'd on your downcast brow ? And could I be

So base, your noble heart must cease to love me.
 My father—his stern virtue never knew
 The weaknesses of gaiety or love—
 I cannot meet his rigorous rebuke :—
 To him I leave my all, and well I know
 That he will leave no debt of mine unpaid,
 Bearing all loss himself. O ! had he shown
 A little of a father's tenderness,
 This had not been ! Him shall I see no more,
 Till with full interest every latest plack
 Shall have been quite repaid :—he shall confess
 That I too can be just.

Ell. O ! thou proud heart !
 But art thou just to me ?

Cath. Yes, Ellen, yes !
 If I return, thou shalt not blush for me :
 And if I ne'er return, of this be sure,
 I shall have fall'n in honour's path and cause.
 But wilt thou, when I'm gone, e'er think on me ?
 Wilt thou retrace our former haunts ? Wilt thou
 Beneath our trysting tree at even-tide
 Thy fair knee bend, and pray for my success,
 And safe return ? I know, I know thou wilt !

SINGS.

A weary weight lies on my heart ;
 My soul is sick and wae, love ;
 Fate sternly calls—I maun depart,
 Though laith am I to gae, love.

But ae grasp o' that snaw-white han',
 Ae taste o' that lip's saft red, love ;
 Ae sigh'd farewell, sae deeply drawn,—
 Ae gaze, an' a' joys are fled, love.

I'll ne'er forget the witching wile
 O' that bright ee o' thine, love ;
 An' the graces o' thy gentle smile
 Aye roun' my heart shall twine, love.
 An' when the cauld, cauld han' o' Death
 Comes o'er my glazing ee, love,
 My last lang sob o' parting breath
 Shall deeper heave for thee, love !

Yet why this gloom ? Cheer thee, my dearest Ellen !
 The parting hour, absence, and distance, all
 That now is woe, will swell our future bliss.
 No boding farewells let us utter, love !
 But part, dreaming the while of all the joys
 That shall be ours, hailing my glad return.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

The Trysting-Tree. (A Spring Evening.)

Enter CATHCART, in disguise.

Cath. Hail, Logan Water ! Hail, sweet Logan
 Braes !

Scenes of my early youth ! beloved scenes ;

Peopled with thousand dear remembrances !
Upon thy banks, thou lively mountain-stream,
How often have I roam'd, lapt in the robe
Of the grey matron, gloaming ; every step
Light as a spirit's, while I hied me on
To the known trysting-tree, to meet with her,
My soul's beloved, sweet Ellen ! Thou old tree !
How oft beneath thy conscious shade reclined,
With soft words, and with softer song, I've woo'd
Her not unwilling ear. O ! well I love
Each haunt of those blest days ! yet not the less
Love I this trysting-tree, that there I took
The last farewell of her, my only love ;
For strong grief has its own most potent spells !
Yes, thou art dear, sweet Logan ! Though my steps
Have trod by mighty rivers, broad and deep—
Oceans to thy small rill—though I have seen
Huge forests, darkening in their vast extent
Whole continents—yet thy light-rippling stream,
Thy sedgy banks, thy scoop'd and bosom'd braes,
Fringed with the hazel grey, and jetty sloe,
Dearer than all, rose on my dreaming moods
In mellow beauty ; as upon the mind
Of our great father, Adam, there might rise
Bright visions of his own lost Eden-home.
And now once more, with glad returning foot,
I tread this mossy greensward. Yes, ye are
Scenes of surpassing loveliness ! But, oh !
Not for yourselves I love you ! All around,
In the clear stream, upon the swelling braes,

In every breath that fans my glowing cheek,
 My spirit feels the holy power of love—
 Love, pure and faithful! On these braes so green,
 Beneath this tree my farewell sighs were heaved—
 My farewell troth was plighted! Where is now
 My own, my dearest Ellen? Does she still
 Love her poor prodigal?—no longer poor,
 Unless she love him not.—But, hush! I hear
 A rustling sound—a light foot-fall! Soft, soft!—
 It is a female figure!—Lo! she bends
 Straight hitherward her steps! Let me retire,
 And watch, unseen, her motions:—for there is
 I know not what strange stirring in my breast,
 As if a spell were on me! [Retires.

Enter ELLEN.

Ell. How strange a thing is love! Years, years,
 long years
 Have sped their round since here he sigh'd farewell:
 And slowly, drearily, they've dragg'd along:—
 Yet are his looks, his words, his very form,
 As clearly present to my mind's fond eye
 As he were now beside me! Will he e'er
 In his own much-loved person glad my sight?
 Or must I trace alone all the dear scenes
 Of joys, and loves, and hopes, for ever gone?
 Yet am I not alone!—the potent call
 Of Love evokes from Memory's shrine bright shapes
 That time can ne'er destroy, nor space exile.

Beneath the trysting-tree let me recline,
 And hold sweet converse with these spirit-joys !

(Sits musing—then sings, in a slow sweet strain.)

O, Logan Braes ! how sad ye seem !
 How sad thy murmurs, Logan stream !
 The primrose, pale as sorrow's cheek,
 The violet true, the daisy meek,
 An' a' the young spring-flowers, are seen
 Peeping through the moss sae green :
 Nae mair, sweet flowers, your fair heads raise !
 For sorrow reigns on Logan Braes !

How sweet the lintie's early sang
 Floats the budding bowers amang ;
 And sweet the lav'rock loud and clear,
 The robin chirping on the brier !
 But, ah ! their sang, though sweet, to me
 Nae joy, nae bosom-bliss can gie !
 Ye birdies, hush your lively lays,
 They glad not me nor Logan Braes !

The birds may sing, the flowers may bloom,
 They canna cheer my lone heart's gloom :
 He's far frae me,—my ain dear lad,—
 And how can I be ought but sad !
 Oh ! days an' years hae come an' gane,
 An' aye I wander here alane ;
 Or sadly think on him who strays
 Far, far frae me an' Logan Braes !

Why did he go and leave me ? I could well
 Have shared his poverty—have shared, and striven

To make it less. O! it had been a lot
 Of perfect happiness! Where is he now?
 What toils may now oppress, what sorrows wring
 His heart, and I not near to soothe his ills!
 Sure, 'twas not wise to go! Now pine we both
 Under our griefs, and those imagined ones
 Each for the other dreads. If e'er again
 In life we meet, no more in life we part.

[CATHCART approaches.

Cath. Gude e'en t'ye, bonnie lassie! Can ye show
 The nearest way to the niest town? I've tint
 My gate amang the muirs, and I would fain
 Rest my auld weary shanks, and lay my head
 In some snug bield till day breaks in the east.

Ell. Good even, old man. I'll lead you to a house
 Where, for this night at least, you're sure to find
 Both kindness and good quarters.

Cath. Mony thanks!
 It's an auld saying, an' a true ane, lass,
 "A soft voice an' a kind heart;"—ye hae baith.

Ell. Fy, fy, old man! to flatter at your years!
 The truth sounds beautiful from hoary lips,
 While flattery's light words are unnatural!

Cath. I spak nae flattery! though, if I had,
 It might hae pass'd for a mere common thing
 Wi' ane but half sae bonnie. Hereawa
 The lads maun sure be scarce, or wonder leal!

Ell. Scarce? There are lads enough; but, scarce
 indeed
 Well might some say so!—

Cath. Let me lead the way,—
I'll help you o'er the stile : the ditch beyond
Is not for you to step across unhelp'd.

Ell. Old man,
You seem to know the way as well as I!—
Nay, the near way!—Who art thou? O! it is!—
It is Cathcart! My lost!—my found!—my own!
(*Flings herself into his arms.*)

Cath. My own dear Ellen! I have come again,
And find thee true as ever! I have won
Wealth, ample wealth;—I have paid every debt—
Ay, every debt but one,—and that each hour
Of life I'll spend in paying!—Dearest Ellen!
Say, shall we now be happy? Shall we now
Knit round our hearts the tie that severs not
While life glows warmly there?

Ell. My kind!—my true!—
My noble-hearted love! And art thou come?—
And do I clasp thee in my arms, safe, safe?—
And shall we part no more?

Cath. No more, my love!
The clouds that lour'd so gloomily are gone;
And all our life-day, yet to come, shall shine
With the blent beams of Plenty, Peace, and Love!
[*Exeunt.*]

X.

THE CHOICE.

And are ye come at last, and do I hold you fast ;
And is my Johnnie true ?
I hae nae time to tell, but sae lang's I like mysell,
Sae lang shall I like you.

Old Song.

CHARACTERS.

THE GUEDEMAN.

THE GUEDEWIFE.

TAM MACGILL, *a Fisherman, and formerly connected
with Smugglers, in love with Jeanie.*

SANDY, *in love with Jeanie.*

JEANIE, *in love with Sandy.*

THE CHOICE.

SCENE I. (*Early Winter.*)

The interior of the Farm-house—the GUEDEMAN mending harness—the GUEDEWIFE moving about and superintending household matters—JEANIE spinning.

JEANIE sings lowly.

“ Oh hon, for somebody !
Oh hey, for somebody !
I wad do !—What wad I not !
For the sake o’ somebody !”

Gudew. What ails thee, Jeanie, lass ? That spinning wheel
Needs wonder-mony trimmings. I declare
The pirn is ne’er the fuller ! There again
Snap goes the thread.—Lassie, what ails the lint ?
Or what ails thee ?

Jean. Dear mother, do not fret,
The lint's not good, and something like a mist
Comes o'er my sight. I really cannot help——

Gudew. Cannot help what?—A mist comes o'er
your sight!

O! ay! no doubt! a sigh or two, belike,
Would help the farce. Fie, lassie! ply the wheel—
That will beseem ye better. Scant eighteen!—
The creature's crazy!

Gudem.—(*Aside to the Gudewife.*)—Come, Gude-
wife, be gentle;

Ye snub her too severely.

Gudew. Hush, Gudeman!

Never ye mind; a mother's bitterest word
Springs from a root of love. I wish to try
The truth and depth of that fond, youthful passion,
Now stirring in her bosom: if it yield,
Why, let it go; and if it stand the test,
'Twill be the better for its trial.

Gudem. Well;

So it ends well, I care the less. Hark! hark!
The wind is up: hear how it howls along
The woody tops of Mabie hills, and beats
Full on the bosom of Nith's smiling vale.

Jean. O, father! what a night 'twill be at sea,
And up among the moorlands; how it roars!

Gudem. Ay, lassie; though a lad should crack
his tryst,

He might be pardon'd on a night like this.

Jean. Pardon'd! ay, thankfully!

Gudew. You silly thing,
If a wild night can stop him, let him stop,—
His manhood or his love is little worth.

Jean. But, mother, if his life——

Gudew. E'en let him risk it.
If his own precious safety, in his view,
Outweigh his plighted promise, oh, good night!
He's not for me.

Jean. Mother, you surely jest.
You cannot mean, that though the night were wild,
The road lay long, o'er many a moss and moor,
And faithless bogs, and roaring mountain-streams,
Were frequent in the path, and sounds of fear,
And shapeless sights of dread, were all abroad;
Each, every peril roused and heightened
By winter and black night, the lover's breast
Should brave all, or be slighted?

Gudew. That I do.
Men were but made to brave the world's rude storms,
And to be ruled by women!

Gudem. Stop, gudewife.
That's if we like to yield, you know.

Gudew. Ay, ay;
No doubt ye'll say so. Well, we'll not dispute
That point just now. But hark! I hear a foot.
Open the door, gudeman: It's not a night
To let the wanderer rap, and wait an answering.

Door opened—enter TAM M'GILL.

M'Gill. Good e'en t'ye all, good folks.

Gudem. What, Tam M'Gill!

What wind's blown you here?

M'Gill. A right stormy one.

Many a night of driving wind and rain,
Sharp sleet, and blinding snow, have I been out in;
But one like this——

Gudew. The last seems still the worst,
Or best, as hap may be. But take a seat,
And plant yourself snug in the chimney-nook.
There;—now let's have your cracks.

M'Gill. Thank you, gudewife;
But let me say, I'm no fair-weather-Jack;
I reckon little of a winter-blast
As any he in all broad Galloway;
But this night's storm—Well, let it roar! Why,
 Jeanie,
How hast thou been? What cheer, my dainty trout?
What! shy and pettish! Nay, be brisk, my young
 one:—

A sharp short shower brings down the bait, a torrent
Would gorge to loathing.

Jean. Would *what*, do you say?
I cannot spell your quaint fisherman-talk;
Give us plain Scotch.

M'Gill. Why, so I do, my lass;
Flavour'd à little with my trade, 'tis true,
But ne'er the worse for that.

Jean. But say, M'Gill,
Is it indeed *so* wild a night?

M'Gill. So wild?—
Just as the gloaming fell I went to meet
Ned Gleg at Cargen Crooks—it makes not why—
But scarcely had we bowne us to our task,
When a deep, stunning, shuddering sound arose,
Growing on earth and air—we knew it well—
'Twas the loud burst of Solway's angry tide
O'er dark Drumroof, and in the cavern'd cliffs
That girdle in the shore of green Colvend:
We stood to listen,—soon the whistling gale
Told of a tempest landward; round the bight,
And o'er the brow, and down the hoary sides
Of Criffel roll'd the storm;—the black clouds shook;
Out-gush'd their gather'd fury; thick and fast
Drove on the blinding snow, howl'd the loud wind,—
We might not bear its wrath—we shrunk—we fled—
Each as his need or his desire advised,
He to some shelter—I strove through the moss
To see my bonnie Jean.

Jean. The more fool you,
To risk your life among the blind moss-pits
On such a thankless errand.

M'Gill. Say not so—
One kindly glance of love were cheaply bought
By the rude buffets of the boisterous storm.
Thou art a torch-light on my stream of life;
And, blinded by the witching blaze, my heart
Plays round its bright destroyer.

Jean.

So you say.

[*Aside.*.]—But soft, my mother's eye is kindling—
well,

Fair words and fair shows be my cue.—Why, lad,
Your praise runs but awry. Did I e'er look
Other than kind when kindly look'd upon?

'Twere but fair play to try, ere you condemn.

M'Gill. Now, fair befall the tongue, my bonnie
lassie,

That speaks no worse encouragement!—But yet
The bir, bir, birring, of that spinning-wheel,—
Bad as a thunder-storm to anglers—checks
The lightsome leaping of my heart and words;
And I must either sit beside you, love,
Or you must quit your spinning.

Jean.

At your choice,

If my side of the fire be warmer.

M'Gill.

That it is,

By all the difference betwixt two and one.
Now I'm right snug, and wondrous happy, too.
Let's slip a gentle whisper now and then—
There's none need be the wiser.

Jean.

Not so fast,

Your gudgeon has not gulp'd the bait yet, lad,
Keen sportsman though you be.

SINGS.

“ I wadna gie my Sandy lad, my Sandy o'er the lea,
I wadna gie my Sandy lad for a' the lads I see.”

Gudem. [Aside.]—This roving spark
From his old habits loves the bottle well,—
I'll humour him a little.—Come, my buck,
What say you to a glass to cheer your heart,
And match the fire-side warmth ?

M'Gill. I say, gudeman,
I've been too long a moonlight trafficker
To shun, ay even a caulker.

Gudem. That's right, lad !—
Gudewife, bring ben the bottle.

(*A small table is brought forward, bread and
cheese produced, and glasses filled.*)

Here's t'ye, M'Gill !

M'Gill. And here's to you, gudewife !
To you, my bonnie Jeanie, and to you,
Light-hearted friend!—May ne'er worse luck be
yours

Than a snug home, a bottle, and a friend.

Gudem. Thank you ! that's not amiss, but might
be better ;—

To have more bottles and more friends than one.

M'Gill. Content ; so I be of them.

Gudem. Come, my lad !
A glass is never half itself until
We time its motions with some lively lilt :
Give us a song ; I know you can.

M'Gill. Well, well,
Although no nightingale, yet I shall ne'er
Stand shill-I, shall-I, upon stepping stones ;
So here goes, as I can.

SINGS.

Fast pours the rain, the wintry storm
 Brews in the black and drumlie sky,
 The wind howls in the leafless tree,
 And wildly raving hurries by ;
 But let it madly rair and rave,
 We dinna mind its din a flee,
 We'll drown its eerie noise wi' mirth,
 And drink and sing wi' canty glee.

There's no a star in a' the lift,
 The moon has hid her face wi' fear,
 The cauld dull earth is wrapp'd in gloom,
 And a' is dowie, mirk, and drear ;
 But moon and stars may a' gae hide
 Their blinkin een for us this night
 We carena by,—to drink and sing
 There isna need o' muckle light.

This night's our ain,—we've nought to do
 Wi' warldly cares, and warldly folk,
 We'll lilt our sang wi' canty glee,
 And drink our glass, and crack our joke ;
 Our days to come but few may be,
 Yet grieving ne'er could make them mair ;
 Then we'll enjoy them while they pass,
 And scorn the threats o' canker'd care,

Let fools gae pine at Fate's decrees,
 The blithest's aye the wisest man ;
 We'll jouk and let the jaw gae by,
 And happy be sae lang's we ca !

Then here's to him wha's heart's aye light,
 Though fate should row her bowls ajee,
 Be his the wale o' fortune's gifts,
 And canty friends to share them wi' !

Gudem. Hale be your heart, my lad ! Another
 glass !

That song deserves it well.

M'Gill. I'm glad ye like it.

Gudew. (to *Jean.*) There, lass ! what think you of
 a lad like that ?

The wildest winter-storm his brow can brave,
 And blithesome is he by the winter-hearth :
 I scorn, mark me, a selfish, timid man ;
 But one that dares and does, deserves to win
 Your highest estimation. See to it,
 As you regard my favour.

Jean. Well, dear mother,
 What hospitality requires, I'll do ;
 Nor should he, yet a stranger, look for more.

(*During the song and the above conversation,
 SANDY HYSLOP approaches, peeps in at the
 window, and sees what is passing.*)

M'Gill. But what say you, dear Jeanie ? Half a
 word

From your sweet lips were worth a thousand songs.

Jean. What can I give for one then ? half a look ?

M'Gill. Ay, half a look would make me proud.

Jean. Proud of your own performance ?

M'Gill. Sly one ! no.

Proud of your favour.

Jean. Win it ere you wear it.

M'Gill. That's what I'll gladly try.

Gudem. Come, come, my lad,
'Mid your small talk ye let the glass stand still.

M'Gill. Never fear that, *there* I can bear my part
Right jollily. My bonnie lively lassie,
Here's to the growth of our acquaintance! Come,
You'll drink to that toast, won't you?

(*Lays his arm round her neck.*)

Jean. Not so fast!
Hands, off, sir, if you please. You seem to make
Fully more free than welcome.

M'Gill. O yes! shyish!
I know a little of you women-folks,
And well I ween that you would rather give
Twenty good kisses in the dark, than one
Where light should ask for blushing. Soft and fair,—
The lightest is the angler's surest cast.

Jean. [*Aside.*] Wou'd he were in the blackest pool
o' Nith,
Till I should fish him out, the hateful brute.—
You're frank, at least; I scarce need be deceived
Since thus you tell your purpose.

M'Gill. Nay, I meant
Nothing rude or offensive; but my life
Has better taught me loose and scoffing terms,
Than the soft words of wooing. Are we friends?

Jean. You, at least, seem to think so.

M'Gill. Fain I would.

(SANDY taps gently at the window, she hears,
starts, and rises hastily.)

Jean. O! father, I've neglected Crummie's supper,
'Tis more than time she had it.

Gudem. Let me go
This stormy night.

Jean. To save me? Father, no;
I'm younger, fitter far to bear the blast
Than you after your toils; I'll go myself.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

The Farm-yard—Enter JEANIE with a lantern.

Jean. Sandy! Dear Sandy! Are ye there? Come,
come!

This is a dreadful night of storm! O, haste ye,
Come with me to the nearest shelter, come!

(*They enter the barn.*)

How could you venture out so wild a night?

San. How could I venture?—Jeanie, if your heart
Had ever felt what true love is, you'd know
That mirkest moonless nights, and wildest storms,
When darkness veils the fighting elements,
Are nought to him, who, like a lover true,
Braves them to meet a maid who truly loves!
That dear belief pour'd vigour through my nerves,

Till, though the tempest smote me in its power,
'Twas the light fanning of a summer breeze.

Jean. Too bold! Why did you dare? You never
thought

What grief unutterable had been mine,
If you had—dreadful even to think!—had perish'd—

San. Oh! specious dissembler!

Jean. How! What now?

San. Ah, false one! Yes, put on well-feign'd
surprise:

Who would have thought so beautiful a form
The dwelling-place of so depraved a mind!

Jean. How mean you? What have *I* done? Or
if *you*

Have broke your faith, why seek to cloak your guilt
By first accusing me? Oh, shame! be manly
Even in your wickedness!

San. Are you so bold!

And shall I plainly speak my grievances?

Jean. Oh! by all means!—the story of your
wrongs!—

I long to hear it.

San. Do you? Listen, then;—

And if you have not lost all sense of guilt
And maiden shame, thank the deep gloom that
checks

The dubious light, and hides thy red confusion!
Soon as the sun sunk o'er the lone Glenkens,
Leaving the fervour of his farewell glance
Behind him, far o'er many a deepening mass

Of clouds ; and gladly from the furrow'd field
Each blithesome ploughman, whistling, hied him
home ;—

I to the moor, the hill, the glen, the stream,
Bent eagerly my hasty steps ; for rest,
Sweet after toil, was not so sweet to me,
As toil to meet with her, mine own loved maid !—
Darkness was round my path, ere I had pass'd
The steepy wilds of green Glencairn ; and ere
I cross'd thy bents, bare, barren Dunscore ! deep,
And deeper grew the gloom, and rising winds
Began to pipe their discords—on I press'd,
For night and howling winds were nought to me,
So I might hear that voice so dearly loved !
At Gribton Holm the Cairn's rough stream I braved,
Though strong it roar'd, nor ford, nor bridge, I
sought—

Down rush'd the tempest headlong in its might,
And wrapt me in its folds—I struggled on,
Swept round the base of proud Terregles Hill,
Pass'd fair Terraughty, and the hermit groves
Of sweet Carruchan, traced the witching lane
Of shady Cargen, cross'd the plunging moss,—
For storms and perils garb'd in hideous gloom
Could not o'erpower or shake me, strong in love,
And confidence that I too was beloved.—
I came and found—O, Jeanie ! not the oath
Of half mankind would I have credited—
Found you half clasp'd in his embrace,
That wild rude smuggler ! One whose darken'd soul

May never prize, no, by a thousandfold,
The jewel he has won !

Jean. (*Aside and reflecting.*) This must be real—
So many miles, a road so drear, a night
So terrible, this must be love, indeed,—
Deceit could never go so far.—Dear Sandy,
'Twere needless cruelty to trifle now ;—
I see, I know it all, your whole mistake.
By all our former vows, by all our love,
And all our hopes, I never gave that man
Encouragement. I hate him ;—but I hid
My deep dislike, for the low whisperings
And keen looks of my mother told a tale
Of no ambiguous meaning.—Did you need
Twice to repeat your signal ? 'Mid the din
Of such a storm, what but a lover's ear—
Ay, a *true* lover's—could have noted it ?

San. And was this all ? It might be so—it was—
It must have been ! If thou deceivest me now,
Truth dwells not upon earth.

Jean. Perhaps I ought
To show some distant, cold, affronted airs ;
But I must frankly own, appearances
Look'd strong against me ; yet, I think you may
Credit my simple word ; or would you more ?

San. No, Jeanie, no ! I'd rather be deceived
Than make my breast the den of jealousy.
Yet I have that to say—it was the errand
On which I came—will amply try your love.

Jean. Out with this mighty trial.

San. Hear me, then,
 And coolly, calmly :—that I love thee dearly,
 Witness the terrors of this howling night,
 That could not keep me from thee ; witness Heaven
 And mine own soul's deep vows there register'd.
 Yet would I not one moment wish thee mine
 Were not the cordial sanction of thy heart,
 And the fair hope of mutual happiness
 To crown the wish ;—then hear, think, and advise me.
 This very day our factor came a-field
 When we were all at work ; he show'd to me
 A letter from the far Isles of the West,
 Where grows the sugar-cane, requesting him,
 At his best speed, to send some careful person
 To act as overseer : large were its proffers,
 Large, fair, and very tempting,—for a few
 Brief years of honest toil and industry,
 To reap that golden harvest, independence,—
 And much he urged me to accept the proffer.
 I ask'd one night to think of it. Night came,
 Our tasks suspending ; through its eerie shades,
 And through the tempest's fury, have I come
 To thee, my Jeanie ! for thy frank advice ;—
 Thy choice must seal my doom. Say, wilt thou then
 Be mine, poor as I am—in all but love—
 Or shall I cross the wide Atlantic—brave
 The sultry fervour of the tropic suns,
 From thee and Scotia far ; my only stay
 The hope to share with thee my treasured stores ?
 Make thou the choice, my love ; I'll dree the weird

Jean. Choice! no, dear Sandy! there's no choice!

What! go

Where fever dwells in every poison'd breeze,
 To breathe it, and to die ere thy life's noon!
 Shouldst thou survive, until thy golden dreams
 Were all into realities converted,
 How will thy feeble and diseased frame
 At thy return, bear the keen mountain-gale?
 Thy step will be a totter, and thy cheek,
 Sallow and thin, have lost its manly bloom;
 Thine eye, no longer bright as evening's star,
 Will glimmer like a death-fire on the moor,
 Sunk in its socket. If my heart and hand
 Can cause thee stay in our own lovely Scotland,
 Content with honest poverty and love,
 There, take them—they are thine—now and for ever!

San. My own, my dearest lassie! to my heart
 Come let me lock thee! Leave thee! never, never,
 While life beats in my bosom! Let us go
 This instant to thy father—tell him all—
 Ask his permission—name the happy day,
 To make us one beyond the power of fate,—
 Then take what Heaven may send! Come, let us go!

[*Enter into the house.*]

Gudem. Ay, Jeanie, thou hast met more fitting
 help
 Than thy old father's! Happy beast, I'm sure,
 Must Crummie be!

Gudew. Gudeman, this is no jesting:—

What means this, daughter? Tell me, on your life,
Who is this fellow, and what wants he here?

Jean. This fellow, as you please to call him, mother,
Is my own Sandy, and he wants your daughter.
Full ten long dreary miles his feet have trod,
Through the rough pelting of this fearful storm,
And all for me: "And he who dares and does
So much for me, deserves my best return;"
Your own words, mother, sure you'll not deny them.

Gudem. Ye pawky jade! well have you fought
your battle!

You've done so cleverly, and turn'd my words
So home and to the purpose, that I think
I must forgive.

San. Gudeman, I come to ask,
Your leave to woo your daughter.

Gudem. Good sooth, lad,
That does not seem to do.

San. Permit me, then
A little farther, may I have your leave
To make her mine?

Gudem. So, so; why, look you, lad,
If you can get the lassie's own consent,—
Which, I confess, seems rather more than likely,
And you be come of honest kith and kin,
And in a fair and decent livelihood,
My leave shall be no lion in your path.

San. To make you easy on one point, gudeman:
My uncle often has entreated me,—
He's old and weary of a heavy charge,—

To come and take possession of his farm
 In all its flowing, full prosperity ;—
 And there I'll go at Beltane ; Jeanie there
 Shall have a home as good as that she left,
 And when my uncle hears that her consent
 Has saved his favourite nephew from the risk
 Of Indian suns, he'll be a father to her.

Gudem. Ye offer fair : there, take her hand ! my
 blessing

Be hers and yours !

Gudew. My blessing, too, be theirs !
 Though she has been self-will'd a thought.

Gudem. O ! that
 Was natural, she had it of her mother.

M'Gill. Well, my smart lad, though you have
 snapp'd the prize

I aim'd at, ne'er mind ; luck's all ; as good fish
 Are in the sea as e'er came out on't yet.

And if you choose to bid me to your wedding,
 I'll drink the bride's health, and the bridegroom's too,
 Without or grudge, or malice.

San. If you don't,
 The fault shall not be mine.

Gudem. What think you, now,
 Suppose we have another brimming glass,
 Just to cement our loves and new-form'd friendships ?

All. Right heartily we hail the blithe proposal !

[*Exeunt.*]

XI.

THE ROCKING.

On Fastern e'en we had a rocking,
To ca' the crack, and weave the stocking,
And there was muckle fun and joking,
Ye need na doubt,
At length we had a hearty yoking,
At sang about.

BURNS,

THE ROCKING.

SCENE I.

A Farm-House. GUDEMAN, JOHNNIE, WILLIE,
ARCHIE, MAT, GUDEWIFE, JENNY, NANCY,
BETTY.

Gudew. Fy, lassies, ply your tasks! the night
wears on,
And little yet to show for't.

Jen. Never fear,
A good darg may be wrought ere bed-time yet,
At least if tongues would do.

Arch. Ay, Jenny lass,
Yours would not fall behind.

Jen. And if it should,
Know ye where one might ask for help?

Arch.

Troth, no !

The kirk-bell may get tired.

Jen.

Bless us ! what wit !

A woman's tongue is like a bell ! How new !
 Some thousand years at least. O ! but you're bright !
 When pedlar Tam dies—

Nan.

Jenny, can ye not

Be civil to your neighbours !

Jen.

Civil ? yes !

Ask Willie else.

Will.

Ask nought of me, unless

You tell me what to answer.

Nan.

Why so, lad ?

Will. Lest with my usual luck I blunder out

What I might wish unsaid ; for ne'er can I
 Say pleasant things, but when I'm on the hill,
 And none but Bawty near me.

Jen.

Oh, to be

A Peewit on the muir, to wheel around
 Your head and list your speeches !

Will.

I'll not say

What you might hear of somebody.

Jen.

Oh, do !

Pray think yourself alone, and let us have
 A fine soliloquy !

Gudem.

That's right ! Come, lad,

You're in for something, speech, or tale, or song,
 Choose which you will ; but sing, or say, you must.

Will.

You task me hard ! but if I must, gudeman,
 Let me make one condition. Let it be

Before the fervid sun had kiss'd away
 The dew-tears of the dawn ; and from their locks
 Shredding a ringlet, cast it in the well ;
 And as it floated on the sacred wave,
 Or sunk, they read an omen of their life.
 Then would they bathe their brows, and drain one
 draught

With trembling lip, and speed in silence home—
 Nor ever was the ringlet after seen—
 It was the Spirit's offering :—many a maid
 Thus did, and bloom'd again in rosy health.
 Young mothers, too, would come, with anxious steps,
 When pining seized their infants. 'Twas a spot
 Hallow'd, indeed, by hopes, and fears, and prayers,
 And all the gushings of the human heart !
 A fair young widow'd mother once there came ;
 Her husband had, among the wintry snows,
 Perish'd, and her poor orphan boy now lay
 Like a lone flower, unshelter'd from the blast,
 Drooping and dying. The poor mother sought
 The Holy Well, her latest hope. She came,—
 Into the wave she cast the silken lock,—
 A soft swell moved the water,—thrice around
 Whirled the lock, then sinking, disappear'd.—
 The mother did not shriek ;—a mother's love
 Is stronger than all omens—but her heart
 Strove with a pang of mortal agony !
 She scoop'd the sacred wave, and tried to hope
 Thus to secure its healing virtue,—turn'd,
 And hied with hasty step away. But ere

She left the silent glen, one gaze she threw
 Back towards the well. And lo! upon its brink
 There sat a female Form, bright, shadowy, pale,
 As moonlight on a snow-wreath. In her arms
 She bore an infant—well the mother's eye,
 And mother's heart, knew its sweet angel-face!
 Three times the phantom kiss'd its lovely brow,
 Then shred one lock of golden hair away,
 Hover'd a moment o'er the Holy Well,
 And, clasping to her breast the infant, soar'd
 Through the grey morning clouds away to Heaven!
 Frantic the mother sped, like mountain doe,
 To her lone home—rush'd to her infant's couch,
 And, as she knelt and pray'd, felt his last breath
 Wander cold, cold across her cheek! It was
 His passing spirit she had seen!

Gudew. And was that true?

Will. For what I know, it was;—
 At least I made it not. A good old man
 Told it to me as what he oft had heard,
 And never heard disputed.

John. But, gudeman,
 What do you think about it?

Gudem. Why, I think—
 I think—in truth I cannot tell! Such tales
 Our fathers, with most potent faith believed;
 They might be true. I know not.

John. If I might
 Give my opinion, I would say that both

We and our fathers err in this : they were
 Somewhat too deeply credent, and we are
 By much too disbelieving. Spirits may
 Act as men do. When in a friend we trust
 With perfect confidence, our very faith
 Makes him the man of honour, and of worth,
 That we believe him. Even so spirits may,
 Though not call'd into being, yet be clothed,
 To our perceptions, by our act of faith,
 In human semblance ; whilst the doubting eye,
 By its own doubts is darken'd. Oh ! there are
 A thousand potent agencies abroad,
 That paint the summer skies, wield the strong winds,
 Store up the sunbeams, and all nature rule
 As their and nature's Author wills ! but we,
 In our proud blinded wisdom mark them not !

Gudem. Most learnedly discuss'd ! But all the
 while

The song stands still. Who next ? Jenny, 'tis you—
 Out with your song or tale.

Jen. Father, 'tis hard
 To set me on so soon : but if I must,
 I'll try a song, a gay one, were it but
 To change our strain, we grow so mystical.

SINGS.

O Sandy is a braw lad,
 An' Sandy is a fine,
 An' Sandy is a bonnie lad,
 An', best of a', he's mine !

There's Tibby glooms, and Nelly gecks,
 An' Nanny looks fu' shy,
 And Katie downa speak to me ;
 But troth I carena by !
 For Sandy is a braw lad,
 An' Sandy is a fine,
 An' Sandy is a bonnie lad,
 An', best of a, he's mine !

Auld Girzie, wi' her cock-up nose,
 She fuffs like ony goose ;
 An' wee bit perkin Marjory,
 Poor thing ! looks unco crouse :
 Fat Lizzie's een for very spite,
 They glow like ony coal,
 An' Betty, wi' her brucket face,
 My sight she canna thole.
 For Sandy is, &c.

The slae is sour, but sourer far
 Is muckle wry-mou'd Jean ;
 An' lang-tongued Eppie, warst ava,
 She flytes frae morn till e'en ;
 Mim Marion throws her wrinkled chafts
 Like ony beggar's dud,
 Glead Matty shakes her corky head,
 And winks as she were wud.
 For Sandy is, &c.

There's no a lass in a' the town,
 But sair she hates poor me ;
 Daft gouks ! they fear they'll lose their joe,—
 And sae it e'en may be !
 To tempt them, for a week or twa,
 The secret yet I'll hide ;
 But I could tell, or this day month
 Wha will be Sandy's bride !
 O Sandy, &c.

Nan. Jenny, ye're perfect mad ! A song like that
A lass should never sing !

Jen. 'Tis just a song
That every lass would like right well to sing,
And sing it of herself.

Arch. I trow it is :
But few speak out so plainly.

Jen. O wise lad !
Speak out ? What is a song ? 'Tis but the heart
Conversing with itself ; and as they rush,
Its feelings murmur music like a stream,
Lively or mournful as may chance.

Arch. 'Tis true.
Yet 'tis a wayward truth : Why should not I
Sing joyous songs ? Yet never in my life
Could I learn one that was not melancholy ;
Though at most other times I'd rather spend
My breath in laughter than in sighs.

Gudem. Perhaps
Your pleasure lies in contrasts ; and your mind,
Playful in idle moods, is grave by choice,
When it calls up its powers. But to your song,
Although you threat us with a mournful lay.

Arch. Mournful indeed it is. And had you
known,
As I did, the poor lad that made it—No,
I need not give you both a song and tale.

SINGS.

'The sun has sunk o'er yon bleak hill,
 The murky night begins to fa',
 Let me gae pace the wood's bield side,
 An' think on her that's far awa !
 Night's blackening gloom is nought to me,
 Nor wintry winds sae wild an' drear,
 While on this ringlet fond I gaze,—
 'Twas hers—the Maid I love sae dear !

Come, sorrow, gin thou wilt ! nae love,
 Nae frien', seek I, my waes to cheer—
 I press the ringlet to my lips,
 While on it draps the bitter tear.—
 I press the ringlet to my breast,
 While my heart's like to burst in twa,
 There shall it ever, ever rest,
 For sake o' her that's far awa !

An' if I ne'er maun see again
 Her for wha's sake I wear it there,
 I'll wed my soul to it alane
 An' never love sweet woman mair !
 An' when my heart has done wi' grief,
 This is the last request I'll make ;
 Oh ! lay it in the cauld, cauld grave
 Alang wi' me, for her dear sake !

Jen. And did he never see her more ? Poor lad !

Arch. No, never ! O'er him now the green turf
 rests,

The green grass waves.

Nan. Oh, tell us how it was !
Do tell us, Archy !

Arch. No. I may not dare
Reveal the secrets of the dead ! His griefs,—
And they were neither few, nor light,—are o'er ;
What of his tale he has himself reveal'd
You have heard sung ; the rest shall sleep for me,
Deep as his own kind heart does now.

Gudem. Well, well,—
We must perforce content us then. Come, Mat,
'Tis your turn next, my boy !

Mat. What maun I do ?
I canna sing ;—if I could tell a tale
Like Sandy's I wad do't.—But I durst gang
An' fetch some water frae the Fairy Well,
If Jenny wad gang wi' me.

Gudem. If you go
You must go quite alone.

Mat. I daurna gang
My lane ! I'll rather do—just ought ye like.

Gudem. Then you must sing a song, or tell a tale,
Or make a speech.

Mat. What is a speech ?

Gudem. You've heard
The minister on Sundays tell the folk
How to be good, and what to do ?

Mat. O yes !
Then I can speak a speech ! Or I came here
My auntie made a speech, ay, mony a time,

Till I can say't amaist as weel's hersell.

But let me stand behind you, will ye, Jenny ?

Jen. Yes, Mat, my man ! Come here and speak ;
not one

Shall see your blushes.

Mat. Thus, old aunt begins :—
“ Mat, my dear bairn ! when your poor mother died,
She left you to my care : She bade me be
A mother to her orphan boy ! I've done
My best to be sae. But the time has come
When ye maun gang and win yere ain bit bread,—
I canna keep ye aye at hame, poor man !—
Ye're gaun amang the fremit ; but mind this ;
Though ye're nae langer in your auntie's ee,
There's Ane aboon that sees your very thoughts !—
Pray even and morn to him !—Pray to be made
True to your master,—kind to every ane,—
An' gratefu' for a' mercies ! Never set
Your han' or heart on aught that ye durst not
Look up to Heaven and crave a blessing on !
Oh ! read your Bible ! learn your duty there !
Do what it bids !—An' He who is the stay
An' trust of orphans will protect my bairn !”—
Will this do for a speech ?

Gudem. Yes, my good boy !
Speak that speech every day when you're alone,
And follow its directions ; and I dare
Foretell for you a life of happiness.
You have done your part well. Now Johnnie, lad,
We're come to you.

John. I wish you had gone past—
You are so accurate. What must I do?

Gudem. E'en what you like.

John. Well, then, I'll sing a song.

SINGS.

The gloaming had fall'n on the dewy lea,
Not a light leaf stirr'd on the spreading tree ;
On a green mossy bank, spring flow'rets amang,
A young shepherd lay, and thus he sang :—

“ More soft than the violet blue is her eye,
Her cheek out-blushes the rosebud's dye,
Far sweeter her breath than the sweet woodbine,
The maid that I love,—Oh ! gin she were but mine !

“ 'Tis not for wealth, for rank, or power,
For fortune's sun, or fortune's shower,
Come what come might, that I ere would repine,
The maid that I love, gin she were mine.

“ There's a wee bird sings wi' canty glee,
An' oh ! but its sang is sweet to me !
For aye it sings, that her heart will incline,
An' the maid that I love, she will yet be mine.

“ How blest would I be !”—But while he sung,
Unseen drew near him the maiden young,
And echoing his lay with a pawky design,
She sung, “ That maiden will ne'er be thine !”

Then loudly laughing she seem'd to hide,
Yet she fled not so fast but he saw her glide
Through bowers with tangling woodbine laced,
Where her flying steps he nimbly traced.

What arts he used I may not say,
 But when next he sung more blithe was the lay ;
 And oft he repeated the closing line,
 “ The maid that I love, she has vow'd to be mine !”

Jen. Ay, Johnnie ! Who'd have thought to hear
 from you
 A song of such sly meaning ? On my word,
 Some folk are ill to fathom !

John. Surely, lass,
 You do not think I'm made of fish ! I know
 The arch wiles of sweet woman ; and I love
 Her bashfulness, half nature, and half art.

Arch. Oh ! most of art ! Well know they that
 they are
 Most charming, when most sly and petulant.
 But Nancy, lass, 'tis your time next.

Nan. My time ?
 I cannot sing ! Will some one sing for me ?

Gudem. No ! You must sing yourself, or tell a
 tale,
 Or speak a speech, or to the well. No help.

Nan. You know I cannot sing !

Jen. I know you can—
 Or croon, at least ! So try !

Nan. Well, if I must !—
 Though well I know you'll mock my tuneless
 voice.

SINGS.

O hark ! the merry music plays
 Sae sweet and gladsomely ;
 Then come and thread the winding maze,
 Fair maid ! alang wi' me.
 " How can I join your sports sae gay,
 Or share your mirth ? " she cries ;
 " When mouldering in the darksome clay
 My ain true lover lies ! "

O maiden ! come alang wi' me,
 The evening's mild an' fair ;
 We'll wander o'er the flowery lea,
 An' breathe the balmy air.
 " How can I crush wi' careless tread
 The flower that bending weeps,
 An' minds me o' the lonely bed
 Where my true lover sleeps ? "

O, maiden ! lay the grief aside,
 That long has dimm'd thine ee ;
 An' pledge thy hand an' be my bride—
 I'll aye be kind to thee !
 " Talk not to me o' love ! for oh !
 My heart is cauld an' dead !
 Dark is the grave, where slumb'ring low
 My only love is laid !

" Instead of bridal robes, prepare
 The pale, pale shroud for me ;
 An' seek my lover's grave, for there
 My bridal bed shall be !

My heart is sick, mine ee is dim—
 I come, my love ! I come
 To share thy peaceful bed of rest ;—
 Thy calm and silent home !”

John. You had no need to be so shy : you’ve done
 Great justice to your song ; and to say that,
 Is to give no slight praise.

Nan. Nay, do not praise
 The singer for the song’s sake : ’Tis enough
 That it has served my turn.

Arch. It seems to be
 The very sister of my Ringlet song.
 Know ye aught of its story ?

Nan. Not a word.
 I learnt it from old Alice of the glen,
 And when I ask’d its story, she would sigh,
 And shake her head, but answer gave she none.

Gudem. Betty, my lass, ’tis come to you at last.
 I hope to hear your voice now :—Not a word
 Has cross’d your lips yet, I believe ; but now
 You must say something.

Bet. Well, gudeman, I’ll try.
 And for my silence, that can be no fault !
 For there are some, not very far to seek,
 Would rather meet, or I’m mistaken much,
 Great listeners than great talkers.

Gudem. Say you, lass !
 Upon my word, you’re a right cunning one
 For observation !—But your song.

BETTY SINGS.

Sweet is the song of early lark,
 'Mid dewy clouds careering ;
 And sweet the blackbird in the glen,
 Grey twilight's echoes cheering ;—
 Sweet sings the linnet near the bush
 Where his mate and young brood nestle ;
 But sweeter the whee wheeple whee
 Of sweet John Campbell's whistle !

Dear to the miser's eager clutch,
 His hoards of golden treasure ;
 Dear the full feast and mantling bowl,
 To the sons of mirth and pleasure ;
 Dear to Ambition's burning heart
 For thrones and crowns to wrestle ;—
 Dearer to me the wheeple whee
 Of dear John Campbell's whistle !

Perpetual motion ! 'tis not in
 Automaton revulsion,
 Wheel, pulley, lever, pivot, crank,
 Attraction, or repulsion,
 In woman's tongue, or fiddler's arm,
 Or apothecary's pestle,—
 Shout, ye philosophers ! 'tis found
 In gay John Campbell's whistle !

Arch. 'Tis excellently sung ; and on the whole,
 It is a drollish thing :—but yet I think
 Fitter for town's folks, o'er a canty glass,
 Than for a farmer's ingle. Now, gudeman,
 It is your own turn next. What will you give us ?

Gudem. Oh ! I must be excused. My part, you
know,

Is to keep others to their duty ;—that
If I have done, I've done my part.

Arch. Gudeman !

O, fy, gudeman ! Is that the way you treat
Your guests ? The country-side will ring
How the Gudeman of Hollinbraes is just
A perfect spoil-sport !

Gudem. That shall never be !
I'll try and hammer out a tale.

A TALE OF HALLOWEEN.

There was a lass—a bold and forward lass,—
Ready with tongue and hand ; nothing she fear'd,
Nothing regarded :—Tales of fairies, ghosts,
And all such things were her derision ; yet,
Strange though it seem, eager she was to try
All charms, spells, omens,—all that weak minds think
Predictive of the future. True, indeed,
She never dreamt of prying into fate
On any point but marriage ; and in that
She did but what most women long to do,
So far as boldness leads them. Well, it chanced
When Halloween came round, after some hours
Of sport and pastime held among the rest,
That she resolved to try one darker charm,—
One which excludes companionship. 'Twas thus :
Alone she went to find a running stream

That flows due south,—a course unnatural,—
There at deep midnight her left sleeve she dipt,
Return'd, and hied in secret to her bed,
Nor spoke one word—not even a whisper'd prayer,
Hung up the sleeve before the fire, and lay
Silent to mark the issue. Brief time pass'd,
Till the door open'd, and a Shape appear'd!—
Forward it came,—one look on her it cast;—
Its eye was red and wild, its brow was knit,
And all its features wrought convulsively,
As if in mortal anguish. Then the sleeve
It turn'd—laid on the chair a little knife,—
Gave her one more red glance, and disappear'd.
In utmost terror for a while she lay;—
But rose at length, took up the little knife,
And hid it in a secret drawer. To none
She told the story; but at times she seem'd
Harass'd by anxious thought. Well, time pass'd on,
And she got married: but most strange to say!
Her husband bore the selfsame face and air
As did the phantom-shape of Halloween!
But nothing of that tale he knew. At length
In an unguarded hour the secret drawer
Was left exposed;—he saw, and knew the knife,—
Instantly seized it, and most fiercely ask'd,
How came it there? Confused at first, she strove
To shun reply. Sternly he bade her tell,
Whence and how it came. Thus enforced, she told
The whole adventure. In his hand he raised
The little knife: “That night, that fearful night,

My soul," said he, " felt all the agonies
 And tortures of the damn'd ! Thou wicked woman !
 This evil-omen'd knife, this very hour,
 The vision's dark hint shall fulfil !" He said,
 And stabb'd her to the heart. She died ; and he
 Went raving mad !

(*During this tale JOHNNY and NANNY, and
 ARCHY and JENNY, have been whispering
 apart.*)

Will. 'Tis a strange tale, gudeman !—
 And surely more incredible than mine.

Gudem. I know not that : I do not vouch its
 truth ;—

But this I think, that those who rashly try
 To tamper with the Evil One, can meet
 Nothing but evil. O ! 'tis very wrong
 To ask, even but in jest, for aid from him,
 Who always strives to work our ruin !

Gudew. Come,
 It's getting late ; lasses leave off your work.
 Nanny, see all things right. Good night t'ye, lads.

Arch. Good night, gudewife. Good night, gude-
 man. Come, Bess,
 Look for your plaid : 'tis time we were at home :
 We must be up before the skreigh of day
 To-morrow for the mill. A kind good night
 To all that stay.

Jen. Well home to all that go !

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

The Farm-yard. JOHNNY and ARCHY, having accompanied the others home, return by different ways, unknown to each other—They enter the Farm-yard from opposite sides—JOHNNY approaching the door, —ARCHY sees, and resolves to frighten him away.

Arch. Hey, fellow! Who are you?

John. Who bade you ask?

Arch. I'll see that soon. (*Collars him.*)

John. My lad, ye'se rue the day

E'er ye laid hands on me!

(*They close and struggle—The dog springs upon them—They fall together—The two Lasses rush out.*)

Nan. Is that you, Johnny?

Jen. Archy, is it you?

Nan. Mercy! what will be done? Oh! he'll be kill'd!

Gudem. What now? Who's there? Come here, come here, gudewife!

Bring me a light.

Gudew. What's all the stir, gudeman?

Gudem. Let's see! What, Archy! Johnny! you too, lasses!

What, in the name of wonder, does this mean?

Arch. In truth, gudeman, I scarce can tell ! We
seem

Playing at hide-and-see ! I had a tryst
With my dear Jenny ; and, as I may guess,
Johnny and Nanny had a like tryst set :
We knew not of each other ; and like fools,
Here are we both, cuff'd, worried, and discover'd !

Gudem. Well, this beats all—Ha ! ha !

Gudew. This is no joke.

Lads, say, in sober truth, what want ye here ?
If nought dishonourable, come not thus
At such untimely hours, by stealth, to break
A decent family's repose, and raise
The country's clash about my daughters ! Speak,
And tell us what ye mean ?

John. For mine own part,
I mean nought, wish nought, but my Nanny's hand
In honourable marriage.

Arch. And for me,
I wish no less. Only I thought it best
To win the daughter's own consent before
I ask'd the mother's leave. Now, let me beg
That I may woo your daughter.

Gudem. Though we have
Reason to be offended—yet I think
Your fault may be forgiven. Lasses, you—
What say ye for yourselves ?—

Jen. Dear father, since
You speak so frankly, I shall be as frank.

Archy has won my heart,—and when you please,
May have my hand.

Nan. I too must break the rules
Of maiden bashfulness, and own as much.

Gudem. Well, well ! All's right ! Come in, come
in a while ;

'Twould do no good to strive against the stream,—
Nor do I feel inclined. Be pure, be kind,
Be faithful to each other ! Be to them
Leal, loving husbands ! And may they to you
Be wives as true, affectionate, and good,
As has to me their mother ! May you long
Live, with full hearts to bless this happy night.

[*Exeunt.*

XII.

THE SNOW-STORM.

Cauld blaws the wind frae east to west,
The drift is driving sairly.

BURNS.

The feathery clouds, condensed and curl'd,
In columns swept the quaking glen;
Destruction down the vale was hurl'd,
O'er bleating flocks and wandering men.

HOGG.

——Down he sinks
Beneath the shelter of the shapeless drift,
Thinking o'er all the bitterness of death,—
His wife, his children, and his friends unseen.

——On every nerve
The deadly winter seizes; shuts up sense;
And, o'er his inmost vitals creeping cold,
Lays him along the snows, a stiffen'd corse.

THOMSON.

THE SNOW-STORM.

SCENE I.

The Moor. (Advanced Winter.)

WILLIE *and* CHARLIE.

Wil. Charlie! Where are ye, Charlie? Rest a bit!

I cannot move another step!

Char. Cheer up!

We'll soon be through the deepest wreath, and then
The worst is past.

Wil. Where are we? Not a foot
Of the wild waste is like itself; the hills
Are scoop'd and rounded into thousand shapes
They never were before; the very streams
Are buried fifty fathoms deep; the glens
Smooth'd up by the white ruin. Lost, oh lost!

Char. Come, come, you must not thus despond ;
the wind

May soon abate.

Wil. It may ; but long ere then
We shall have ceased to feel it.

Char. [*Aside.* (How his face
Is changed ! His strength and self-command are
gone.

Unless I can awake his heart, I fear
All's over with him !) This will never do !
To yield ere we have well begun ! Will this
Find and secure our flocks ?

Wil. Our flocks ! Ay—yes—
Flocks said ye ?—the gudeman—they're buried
deep,
Poor things !

Char. Poor things, indeed ! Where are they now ?
(No, no, this will not do ! he minds me not !
I'll touch another chord.) How did you leave
Your poor sick child this morning ? And your wife,
Is she well ?

Wil. Child !—Ay, that's my Fanny ! O !
The patient little sufferer ! Yes, she will—
She will recover ! Death will never crop
My little moorland floweret in its bud !
Lucy's strong prayers will mount before the throne,
And bring down health and bliss ! Shall we go on
And seek our flocks ?

Char. Do you feel strong again ?
Or shall we rest a little longer here ?

Wil. Rest ! No, let us move on ! Alas ! I feel Weak, very weak ! Here must I stay and die !

Char. But did your little Fanny seem indeed Better this morning ?

Wil. Fanny ! my dear child !
Yes, she is better ! While my Lucy sought
My plaid, I knelt beside her bed, and gazed
On the sweet infant's face. Her brow was calm,—
Pale, but quite calm ; her eyes were closed ; but life
Shone fresh through their transparent coverings ;
Her cheek was peaceful, and her gentle breath
Raised her fair bosom mildly, healthfully,—
No pain disturbing her soft sleep :—I touch'd
With lightest kiss her silent lip, and thank'd
The gracious Being, who alone can give
Repose to suffering mortals ! Shall we yet
Meet, and together praise him ? O ! no, no !
My limbs are powerless, and my heart is sick !
Charlie, what can we do ?

Char. Trust in that voice
That stills the tempest !—in that mighty hand
That snatch'd his doubting follower from the wave !
And strong in him go forth, surmounting all
Our present dangers !

Wil. Yes, in him I trust
For future bliss, but not for longer life.
For I bethink me now, that yesterday,
About this very hour,—my soul had been
Sad for my Fanny's illness,—while I sat
And eyed the far horizon's verge, where glared

The weather-gleam, and loom'd the coming storm,
 Sudden a trance of rapture fill'd my breast—
 A passion of ethereal bliss!—My soul
 Seem'd born into a new existence!—All
 Was one wild whirl of speechless ecstasy.—
 'Twas a foretaste of death! And, see! see! see!
 Look there! My Fanny! O! thou angel-form,
 Take, take me with thee! Lay thy holy hand
 Upon my brow, and shade these burning glories!—
 I come! I come!—

(Staggers forward, and falls dying.)

Char. He's gone! he's gone! High Heaven! what
 can I do!

Scarce can I drag mine own exhausted limbs
 Through the deep swelling snow-wreaths,—can I
 then

Bear his unhelping bulk? Shall I speed home
 And seek assistance! The swift-shifting snows
 Will mar all efforts to retrace my steps!—
 Yes, this may do!—Burly, poor faithful dog!
 Watch here till I return! It is the last
 Sad service thou wilt ever do for him!
 Come with me Flora! I will need thy help
 To find this spot again. Heaven be my speed!
 Direct my steps, and nerve my sinking frame,
 And I may save him yet!

[Exit.]

SCENE II.

The Farm-house.

The GUDEMAN—The MINISTER.

Min. 'Twas well that I was near your house,
gudeman,
When this wild wind began ! I never could
Have found my way across the pathless moor,
Through this thick-whirling mass of drifting snow.

Gudem. It was indeed, sir. But you're very wrong
To venture out so far afield, in such
Rough winter weather !

Min. When my duty calls
'Tis mine to follow ; and to leave the rest
To the wise ordering of Providence.

Gudem. But do you think, sir, every thing we do,
And every thing that happens us, is ruled
By Providence for some wise end ?

Min. I do,
Most certainly ; and that for purposes
Both wise and merciful !

Gudem. But some slight things,
Some accidents—

Min. No ! nothing can be slight,
Nor accidental ! *We* cannot foresee
The bearing of events ; but, if we could,

Then should we see that all things are arranged
 Wisely and well,—all work to one great end,—
 And that great end is holiness and love !
 It seems mere accident that I am here,—
 Yet am I well convinced that I am here,
 Because 'tis best I should be so ; although
 I know not yet the reason.

Gudem. I am glad
 To hear you hold that glorious belief !
 What should we, tenants of the mountains, do,
 If we could not, when the strong tempest raves,
 Look up, and trust in Him, whose mighty word
 Can still its fury ? O ! how powerfully
 That blessed text speaks comfort to our souls,
 In times of trouble, peril, and alarm,
 Which bids us cast our cares on Him, whose love
 Careth for us more truly, tenderly,
 Than even a mother's !

Min. Make *that* faith your stay,
 And ye need fear no evil. Hush, I think
 I hear a cry for help ! Haste to the door,—
 It may be some poor wanderer !

Gudem. It is !—
 I see a man struggling amid the snow,—
 'Tis like our shepherd, Charlie : he'll have lost
 The sheep, I fear ;—but since he's safe himself,
 'Tis the less matter.

Enter CHARLIE.

Well, how fend the flocks?—

I fear right badly. Silent! What is wrong?—

How wild he looks! He cannot speak! Good Heaven!
Some dreadful thing has happen'd! Where is Willie?

Char. He's—O! Gudeman! he's lost! He'll die!
Help, help!

Gudem. Where is he? Where? How can we
help? Speak, speak!—

Char. He's wreathed by this time in the snow!—
I've left

His own dog, Burly, with him. Haste, make haste!
I'll lead you to the spot: get help to bear
Him home! We yet may save his life! Haste, haste!
O! his poor family!

Gudem. Come, let us all
Speed to his rescue.

Min. Lo, the wind abates!
I'll hie me to his cottage. Now, gudeman,
Behold the errand which my Master has
Sent me upon! To pour the balm of hope
And comfort on the stricken mourner's soul.
O! He is ever-merciful, even when
His chastening hand is heavy.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE. III.

The Cottage—LUCY watching by the bed of her dead Child.

Lucy. She's gone, she's gone! My child,—my only child!—

Life of my life! She's gone,—for ever gone!

My sweet, my darling innocent! Farewell

To all a mother's tender cares and joys!—

But thou art calm—the tempest scares not thee.

Where is thy father, my dead child?—alas!

The sorrows of the living and the dead

In fearful union thicken over me:

O! that he were return'd! Return'd!—to what?—

A melancholy home awaits his coming!—

No little foot shall meet him at the door;—

No shrill and silver voice salute his ear

With “Father, father!”—No slight twining form

Climb on his knees, and hang around his neck,

And shower sweet kisses on his manly cheek!

She's gone,—for ever gone!—

The storm howls fearfully,—would he were home!

Methinks I see him! No, 'twas but some thick

And whirling volume of fast-drifting snow!

How awful 'tis amid this lonely wild

To sit beside the dead, while all around

Roars the strong tempest! O! that some blest foot

Might come to break this fearful solitude!

It slackens ! He will soon return—my child !—
 Return to find thee,—silent, breathless clay !—
 Now he does come indeed !—Oh ! no ; it is
 Our good young Minister.

Enter the MINISTER.

Min. How do you, Lucy, and your little child ?
 I heard 'twas ill.

Lucy. She *was*, sir.

Min. I am glad
 That she is better. But you weep !

Lucy. Look there !
 O ! my sweet innocent !

Min. Forgive me, Lucy ;
 I spoke unwittingly,—I did not know
 That she was gone to rest. Be pacified !
 She hath escaped the bitter ills of life.
 The Father hath in mercy call'd her hence,
 Ere guilt had stain'd, or sorrow wrung her soul—
 The taint she had from Nature, we may trust,
 Forgiven her for the sake of Him who died,
 That we might live for ever !

Lucy. Let me weep,
 Else will my full heart burst !

Min. It is no fault,—
 For nature will have vent. Yet, do not weep
 As those that have no hope. She has but gone
 Where you, where all must follow. You shall meet
 In holier, happier lands, to part no more.

Lucy. I hope, I trust we shall! 'Tis very kind
Of you thus to speak comfort to my soul.

Min. It is at once my duty, my delight,
And my great privilege. But where's your husband?—

Lucy. Out on the moor.

Min. Amid this storm-drift, Lucy?

Lucy. It is the shepherd's lot; and he has learn'd
To meet and brave it. Yet I wish he were
Safely return'd.

Min. I wish indeed he were!
For it is fraught with danger.—

Lucy. O! sir, tell—
Have you heard ought? That solemn, earnest look—
What has befallen him?

Min. Nothing, that I know
For certain——

Lucy. O! torment me not with fears!
Speak, speak the worst!—

Min. Chill'd and fatigued he rests
A short way off,—he'll soon be here—they've gone
To help him home.

Lucy. O! never, never more
Will he return alive! O, gracious Heaven!
Drive me not to despair! I too will go,
Find out his body, and there lay me down
And die!—

(Attempts to rush out,—he prevents her.)

Min. Almighty Father, help her! O, be calm!
Submit thy soul to Him who never smites

But with a merciful intent. They come,
Bearing thy husband.

Enter CHARLIE, GUEDEMAN, &c. with the Body.

Lucy. My husband! my own William! Dead
dead, dead!

Let me die too! Oh! oh!—

(Falls upon the body, and faints.)

Min. Is life extinct?

Gudem. Alas! I fear it is.

Min. Raise the poor widow'd, childless mother up,
From the chill'd body. Place it near the fire,
And try if vital warmth may be restored.

Gudem. 'Tis all in vain!

Lucy. *(Recovering.)*—Where is he? Let me clasp
Him to my heart, and warm him into life
With my embraces! Stay me not! Hold off!
Who shall divide the husband and the wife?

Min. Thou hast no husband now!

Lucy. It cannot be!—

It must not be! Child! Husband! Dreadful day!
Widow'd, and childless! Break, hard heart, at once,
And let me follow them!

Min. Poor lonely one,
I cannot blame your grief;—yet, oh, be calm!
Submit to Heaven! O, Thou, Most Merciful!
Support her in this hour of bitter woe
And terrible bereavement! On her soul
Pour thine own gracious balm, and be to her

Strength in her day of trial ! Lucy, think,
Death is release from sin and every woe ;
Yes ! Death is truest liberty and life !
'Tis freedom from the fightings and the fears,
That outwardly and inwardly assail
Our harass'd souls ! Death, like a parricide,
Slays his own parent, Guilt,—nay, slays himself !
For, with the last, the mortal pang, our souls
Spring into life immortal, never more
To sin, to sorrow, or to die !
Why shrink we, then, from our deliverance ?
Why weep for the deliver'd ? Rather let
The love that clings around our human hearts,
Partake of their enlargement, break the spell
That held it captive here below, and soar
With them to the pure home of perfect peace,
And holiness, and everlasting joy !
O ! blessed be the Mighty One, who bought,
With his most precious blood, for us this great,
This glorious Salvation ! His be all
The praise, and all the glory, through the round,
The endless round of vast Eternity !

Soon as the snow abates, be it our care,
This lifeless clay, to its own element,
Back to restore. Lucy, thou shalt not want !
My gentle Mary's tender heart will joy
To succour thy distress, and soothe thy woe.
I have a little cot ; there shalt thou dwell,
With half thy soul already in the skies :
While they who aid and comfort thee, shall feel

The blessedness of doing good, and grow
Thereby more ripe for Heaven !

Lucy. Now blessed be
Thy peace-distilling lips ! servant of God !
I cannot yet pray, for my heart is wild ;
But on thy fervent words ascends my soul,
And tastes of consolation !

SCENE IV.

*The MINISTER, LUCY, and several aged Neighbours—
the Funeral train just disappearing—LUCY gazing
after in an agony of tears.*

Min. Poor widow'd mourner ! vain are human
words,
Or human sympathies to soothe thy woe !
Look up to Heaven, there dwells thy comforter !
Nor there alone—here, everywhere, to all
Who on Him trust ; the day-spring of His love
And mercy dawns, beaming eternal peace.
Think on his blessed word !

Lucy. I do, I do !
And I have tasted of its healing power.
But O ! my heart is sorely tried. Alas !
I shall see *him* no more !

Min. Yes, thou shalt see,
Shalt meet him in that land where sin and death,
And sorrow, are unknown—to part no more.
Life is but daily, hourly, death : we speed

With swift involuntary step, along
 Through time, still onward to eternity;
 Yet this brief hurried span, so insecure
 And fleeting, labours with the mighty birth
 Of everlasting bliss or woe. How great,
 How awfully important then its use!
 What is the world, or life, or death, or all
 That we can here enjoy or suffer? Nothing!—
 And less than vanity, but as they work
 Our spiritual advancement! Are they not
 All overruled by mercy infinite?
 Then let us joy, as though we joy'd not; grieve,
 As though we felt not grief, and ever yield
 With cheerful willingness to Him who works
 In all, by all for his own people's good.
 Come, Lucy, dry your tears, and leave with me
 This melancholy scene. My Mary has
 Prepared thy little cot.

Lucy. Not yet, not yet!
 A little longer let me linger here,
 Amid the sad memorials of past joys!—
 I cannot leave them yet! My husband! child!
 I cannot leave your sweet home yet! the links
 Of loves and sorrows clasp around my heart,
 And bind me to this little lonely hut.
 My child! my husband!

Min. 'Tis the fervent voice
 Of Nature speaks! I cannot urge thee, Lucy.
 But in thy solitude converse with Him
 Who hears and sees in secret. He will make
 The wilderness an Eden—here will build

The temple of His presence. When thy heart
 Has, by its earnest wrestlings, won repose,
 Then come, a ready home awaits thy coming.
 Till then I leave thee, Lucy, not alone,—
 I leave thee with thy Bible, and thy God,
 The sacred stream, and the eternal source
 Of holiness, and immortality,
 And everlasting joy! Come, let us all,
 Impress'd with solemn, sympathetic awe,
 By each memorial of the lately dead,—
 The presence of the living desolate,
 Unite in breathing the low plaintive strains
 Of a consoling dirge-hymn.

. DIRGE.

Mourn not for those who die !
 They but escape this scene of strife,—
 They pass in rapid voyage o'er
 The stormy ocean-wilds of life ;
 Secure they reach that happy shore,
 Where holy peace and rest shall be
 Theirs through a long eternity !
 Mourn not for them !

Mourn not for those who die !
 The weary pangs the heart that wring,—
 Fled joys, lost hopes, and festering woes,
 No more to them can sufferance bring ;
 Soundly they sleep in calm repose ;
 They sleep—till time shall pass away ;
 They sleep—till dawns eternal day !
 Mourn not for them !

Mourn not for those who die !
 Died they in early youth ? Oh ! blest,
 Thrice blest are those who die in youth !
 While yet the tender, guileless breast
 Is thy pure home, bright Seraph ! Truth !
 Ere vice has lured their steps astray
 From virtue's onward, heavenly way.
 Mourn not for them !

Mourn not for those who die !
 Died they even in that sunny hour
 When manhood's morn shone bright and free
 When hope exulting dreamt of power,
 And vision'd glories yet to be ?
 O ! they have never learn'd to know
 A hopeless bosom's sickening woe !
 Mourn not for them !

Mourn not for those who die !
 Had age the furrow'd brow impress'd,
 And thickly veil'd the sunken eye ?
 Had life's tide, ebbing in the breast,
 Left gradual its cold channels dry ?
 Death, like a pitying friend, has come
 To call the weary pilgrims home !
 Mourn not for them !

Mourn not for those who die !
 If suffering Nature, sad and weak,
 Must shed the tear, and heave the sigh,
 Wouldst thou the wells of comfort seek ?
 Mourner ! thy lost ones live on high !
 The Father has but call'd his own ;—
 Bend thee, and say, " **THY WILL BE DONE.**"
 Mourn not for them !

Mourn not ! they are not dead !
No ! they have burst the galling chain
That bound them to this dungeon-world ;
Their souls with their Redeemer reign,—
Love's banner o'er them floats unfurl'd !
For ever, and for ever bless'd
Are those who in their Saviour rest !
Mourn not for them !

Mourn not ! They live for aye !
Death's stingless shafts in vain are cast ;
And vainly yawns the grave's deep gloom ;
The tyrant's shadowy reign is past,—
Burst the dark barriers of the tomb !
Sin dies in death—all sorrow dies !
To endless bliss the ransom'd rise !
Rejoice for them !

FINIS.





